



CLOSE COMBAT MAGE

BOOK 04

Cloud Sky

EPUB CREATION BY LISA HAYES

Close Combat Mage

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by

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Synopsis

As a mage, it's very embarrassing to be in the water-type.

Although it's a battle profession, the attack is very weak.

Most people use it as a support profession.

But, the appearance of Suo Jia (索加) changed that convention.

A water-type mage can also be incomparably strong!

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Chapter 301 – Alchemy Techniques (Part 2)

As Suo Jia was thinking it over, the Diamond Dragon's body shook, and the thick layers of Glacial Armor covering its body began to crumble and fall to the ground. The next moment...the milky-white little creature jumped out from the mess of ice cubes, right into Suo Jia's arms like a spoiled brat.

As the little creature played around in Suo Jia's arms, he blankly stared at the cast off Glacial Armor on the ground. Then...Suo Jia suddenly cried out happily, and tossed the pet in the air excitedly. As a result of this sudden unforeseen event, the little pet hurriedly opened its wings, struggling to stay in midair. It looked at Suo Jia in shock, it just couldn't understand why its owner had suddenly thrown him up!

After seeing that the little creature hadn't fallen, Suo Jia retracted his hands which he had originally stretched out to catch it. He then confidently turned around and said to the other three, "Alright, let's all hurry up and find a place to set up our tents. Give me a week's time, and I'll come up with a way to pass through these plains!"

After hearing that Suo Jia had actually come up with an idea, the others excitedly flocked around him, questioning him what this method of his was. But from the beginning to the end, Suo Jia refused to reply to their questions. With lack of better option, Xiang Yun, Roger, and Nicole could only go off and put up the tents.

Suo Jia's group put up their tents on the northern side of the mountain face. The ones they used were peak-grade Earth Tents created by Earth Masters. Coming to adventure around the Greater Trade Routes was not an easy task in the first place. If one didn't treat themselves slightly better, they'd probably end up collapsing soon afterwards.

From the outside, the four Earth Tents seemed to be round and two meters in diameter. But with the Earth Master's Spatial Compression and Collapsible Techniques, the inside of the tents could be described as luxurious and extravagant. There weren't decorations, but the tents were hundreds of ping in surface area!

After eating Roger's cooking, Suo Jia immediately re-entered the tent. Having been inspired by Roger, Suo Jia had already come up with a way to get past these Thorn Mice. Actually, it was pretty simple; they could build an armored chariot!

The Thorn Mice were only the size of house cats. Their physical attack power was basically zero, and they didn't have any magic attack abilities. Their only method of attack was shooting out those needles with paralyzing toxins, and their overall numbers.

Now, Suo Jia just needed to create an armored chariot to block those poisonous arrows. With its protection, nothing would be a problem. They could easily pass through these plains of Thorn Mice.

Suo Jia dumped a large amount of materials out of his interspatial ring. When he looked at the various types of ores and materials strewn over the ground, he couldn't help but furrow his brows. Although these things were precious and rare, he was currently unable to refine and forge them, so there was no way he could use them!

The third generation interspatial ring had 100 cubic meters of space filled with random things. Suo Jia couldn't even remember when he'd gotten many of them. Thus...Suo Jia poured everything out, looking for something he could use.

As people say, those that put in effort aren't disappointed. After searching through the objects, Suo Jia finally found a metal chariot frame. Of course...at the moment, the chariot frame was completely disassembled. How else would such a large chariot be stored into the interspatial ring?

When he looked at the chariot frame parts on the ground, Suo Jia suddenly remembered; he'd found this chariot in the Atomic Alchemy Labs. It wasn't really anything special, probably what the staff at Atomic Alchemy Labs had used as a means of transportation.

The chariot was actually a pair of metal wheels with an axle, and an open seat on top. It was extremely simple, not anything like an item created with alchemy. It could be obtained anywhere. But to Suo Jia, this was extremely hard to come by, a priceless object.

However...the chariot alone wouldn't do! If one just sat on this chariot, they'd definitely get turned into a porcupine. While thinking this, Suo Jia assembled the chariot.

First was the window-shaped frame, then the axle was locked into place on it. Then, the wheels were installed, the shaft, and finally, the seat. Everything was OK. But this kind of thing didn't seem to be very appropriate to use!

Suo Jia looked at the simple and crude chariot and sighed. He then removed the simple seat. That way, only the shaft, frame, and wheels remained. After looking at the extremely simple chariot, he once again flipped through his interspatial ring in search of something.

His efforts did not fail him. Finally...Suo Jia found a giant chandelier part from his ring. That's right...this had been excavated from the Atomic Alchemy Labs ground level. Suo Jia knew that this chandelier had been suspended in the air in that ground-level lounge, but...he really couldn't remember when he'd placed such a thing into his interspatial ring.

The chandelier was actually like an upside-down umbrella. The ribs of the umbrella were separate from each other, and they had 2-3 meter long, arc-shaped metal supports. Suo Jia couldn't help but smile in excitement at this.

Suo Jia first used covered the entire chariot with an Earth

Rhinoceros's skin. Then...he firmly fastened the 18 metal arms from the chandelier around the chariot, forming a cuboid space with the frame as a chassis. All the metal arms were curved towards the top of the chariot, and gathered together on the roof. At first glance, the 18 metal arms wrapped around the space made it seem like a vehicle that trapped prisoners!

Although the inside of the chariot wasn't small, roughly about six square ping in size and enough to fit four people, this still seemed a bit imperfect.

Suo Jia flipped through his interspatial ring for a while and pulled out a small Earth Tent. He then fastened it onto the chariot and the surrounding metal arms. With the way he set it up, the small Earth Tent was fitted to the inside of the metal chandelier arms, flawlessly forming the carriage's inner walls!

Of course, this alone wasn't enough to pass through the Thorn Mice plains. Although the Earth Tent was pretty good, it didn't have any defensive capabilities. A single needle would rip it apart, so it couldn't be relied on to resist any kind of attack.

However, Suo Jia wasn't concerned. The sandworm skin that he had collected a few days ago could prove its use now. After retrieving it, Suo Jia wrapped and fastened the sandworm skins around the 18 metal arms as protection. At the very least, the Thorn Mice didn't have the ability to damage it.

As an alchemist, Suo Jia's tools were quite complete. Of course... he hadn't collected them all by himself. They had all been shipped over from the Atomic Alchemy Labs. There was currently no person in the world that had a more complete set of alchemy tools than Suo Jia did.

An entire week passed. Finally...a glorious chariot appeared within Suo Jia's tent. The golden wheels had earth elemental spell arrays carved on them so that they could smoothly fly over even swamps without sinking. A pair of perfectly straight, gilded shafts

stretched out from the chariot.. The shafts' ends had been carved into the shape of a giant dragon's head by Suo Jia. which probably had some fear-inducing effect on the lowest-level magical beasts.

Of course, Suo Jia spent the most effort on the carriage. The entire carriage was two meters tall, two meters wide, and three meters long. A small Earth Tent was embedded into the carriage. When one opened the door, two-thirds of the carriage would be occupied by the tent. The only other space was the meter where the door was.

Suo Jia looked at the chariot that had taken him a week's time to make, and nodded in satisfaction. This chariot wasn't to be underestimated. Although it didn't look very large on the outside, and its carriage's space was too small, one couldn't forget that the inside of it had a small Earth Tent inlaid. Once one entered the carriage, they'd be met with a 40 ping room. Even if there were fourteen people present, it wouldn't seem crowded, let alone four people.

Since he'd been extremely successful, Suo Jia naturally didn't hide it from his three companions any longer. He pulled open the tent door and brought Nicole, Xiang Yun, and Roger in. When they looked at the exquisite chariot, they all cried out in admiration, just as Suo Jia had anticipated.

As Suo Jia proudly narrowed his eyes and enjoying everyone's praise, Nicole said in a low voice, "That...Young Master Suo Jia, what do you plan on using to pull the chariot? Don't tell me you're going to make the Diamond Dragon do it!"

"Ack!" Suo Jia's jaw dropped open in shock. That's right...how had he forgotten this? He didn't have horses at the moment, and even if he did, they'd be useless. Aside from the Great Frost Wurm, what other creature could completely ignore the attacks from these Thorn Mice?

Chapter 302 – This Way, As Expected (Part 1)

The idea of the Great Frost Wyrms pulling the chariot was immediately rejected by Suo Jia. Based on its current strength, it couldn't possibly maintain its Diamond Dragon state for long. Didn't that require using up magic power too? The little creature would soon use up all its energy, and would be unable to walk very far.

Suo Jia took a deep breath and gestured for the three people to leave. Afterwards...he sat cross-legged on a cushion, and continued to ponder this nonstop. After thinking about it back and forth, he finally sighed. It looked like...the only thing he could do was to create a simple magic automaton and use that to pull the chariot.

Ever since he'd first obtained the magic automatons, Suo Jia had been researching them this whole time. At the present, although Suo Jia still couldn't create any powerful magic automatons, making a simple one to pull a chariot would be too easy. As long as it could move, it would be fine. Once one understood the principle, even a three year old child would be able to do it.

According to the conventional theories, Suo Jia quickly create a simple, humanoid magic automaton. Its body, head, arms, and legs had been made with everything needed available. Its two arms were connected to the chariot shaft, and its feet were planted on the ground. Once a magic core was embedded within to provide it power for propulsion, the automaton's legs would be able to move, so it would be able to pull the chariot forwards.

However, Suo Jia soon discovered a problem. Although the bipedal humanoid automaton could pull the chariot, it was too simple and crude to have the ability to control balance. The automaton was originally not very balanced, so if it pulled the chariot, it would probably end up pulling it down a cliff.

To resolve this difficult issue, Suo Jia directly added another two legs to the automaton. At first glance it looked somewhat like a spider. It had four legs, but possessed the body, head, and arms of a human.

Suo Jia shook his head with a dry smile as he looked at the strange automaton. However...although it looked more on the uglier side, and was a tad odd, the support of the four legs indeed made it very stable. It wouldn't sway from side to side and fall over. When the four legs moved, they could go in any direction extremely steadily.

Suo Jia felt slight disappointment at the sight of the four sharp-legged, spider-like magic automaton with a human body and head. He had never imagined that his first ever magic automaton creation in his lifetime would be this kind of freak. However...for the sake of dealing with the challenges ahead, he had no choice but to do this no matter how dissatisfied he was.

At the moment, this automaton was extremely crude. At a quick glance, it looked like it was a ton of worn out iron rods welded together, but...although it was rough, Suo Jia could guarantee that this automaton had definitely been created based on the most fundamental principles of the magic automaton creation art. Although such a basic thing was extremely simple, it also meant that it couldn't possibly go wrong.

Despite the fact that it had many flaws, and was very rudimentary—aside from moving, it didn't have any other abilities—it had some strong points. For example, it was simple, sturdy, stable, durable, hard to damage, hard to breakdown...

Pleased, Suo Jia pulled out the remaining sandworm skin and used a glue specifically for alchemy to stick this extremely tough and durable leather onto the outside of the magic automaton. Even its four sharp feet weren't left out. Once the entire magic automaton was covered in the thousand year sandworm leather, it no longer seemed like a machine at a single glance, but rather more

like a living magical beast!

Although the inside was exceptionally basic, once the leather covered that funny-looking inner composition, the strange model instead emitted a faint sinister aura, like the resurrection of an ancient magic god.

“Hehe...” Suo Jia smugly smiled. In order to strengthen the effects, Suo Jia added two sharp and piercing horns that stuck up backwards from the back of the magic automaton’s head. The reason he added these was simple; didn’t great dragons all have a pair of these things? Since they had them, how could Suo Jia’s magic automaton not?

Suo Jia’s heart suddenly stirred. A great dragon only had two horns. In order to increase effectiveness, he might as well put 3 horns on the magic automaton; wouldn’t that make it look mightier? Suo Jia excitedly busied himself. Soon after, a third sharp horn was slanted up backwards from the magic automaton’s forehead.

Suo Jia grew more and more excited at the sight of the crown-like, awe-inspiring horns pointing towards the back. He added long, piercing horns on the left and right shoulders of it as well. These didn’t really have any practical use, but it undoubtedly made it look more impressive!

Suo Jia was just that kind of person. Once something caught his interest, nothing could stop him. After he finished adding the horns to the shoulders, he shifted his focus on the automaton’s four sharp feet. Suo Jia added a piercing barb on each sharp foot that stretched from the tip of the foot to outside the knee. The barb gradually increased in length.

Finally, Suo Jia retracted his hands in satisfaction, and a magic god descended. Although it was still just something that pulled a chariot, its visual effects were enough to stun anyone!

Suo Jia studied the clear, awe-inspiring fellow and after some

thought, firmly decided, “Hehe...this is the first magic automaton I’ve ever made, so I should give it a name. Yea...from today onwards, it’ll be called Baltic!”

Suo Jia pulled out a fire elemental magic core, preparing to inlay it in a spell array. As long as the magic core was fixed, the magic automaton would have the power of propulsion, and would be able to officially move around.

Suo Jia opened the hidden door on Baltic’s back. Just as he was about to set the fire elemental magic core, he suddenly changed his mind. Since it was being used to pull a chariot, the earth elemental monster core was obviously better to use. Moreover...this automaton was his first, so he had to use something better.

Suo Jia returned the fire elemental monster core back into his bag, and pulled out the thousand year sandworm monster core. Without any hesitation, he set it in the spell array on the automaton’s back.

The automaton’s propulsion was dependent on transforming the energy within the spell array’s monster core. The entire array allowed a total of six monster cores to be embedded: earth, water, fire, wind, light, dark, every type. At the same time...one could also set a main crystal in the center position. This crystal would set the magic automaton’s overall attribute.

Suo Jia thought about it for a bit then pressed the thousand year sandworm monster core into the spell array, the center of the hexagram. Then...he pulled out another six crystals of various types. Although these weren’t high ranked crystals, they were enough to propel Baltic.

After every monster core had been put into place, Baltic’s eyes suddenly lit up. With a flash of emerald light, Baltic’s body seemed to come to life as it lightly moved around. It was a pity that...Suo Jia knew that currently, this was just some machine. It couldn’t possibly gain its own consciousness yet.

When he looked at Baltic blankly standing in front of him, Suo Jia inwardly decided that in the future, he'd definitely gather six elemental peak-grade monster cores. With the push of these peak-grade cores, Baltic would be able to display an extreme amount of strength.

Of course, just monster cores weren't enough. Suo Jia would also have to continue researching the art of magic automaton creation, and continue modifying Baltic to perfection. Otherwise, no matter how much power it had, it wouldn't be able to display its full strength, and would just be useless.

Suo Jia completely inspected the entire war chariot and Baltic one more time. Although he wanted to immediately go research the art of automaton creation and alter Baltic, Suo Jia knew that he couldn't skip straight to the end. Everything had to progress slowly. Currently, the most important part was passing through this crisis!

Half an hour later...

Under Suo Jia's urge, Xiang Yun, Nicole, and Roger packed up their bags and entered Suo Jia's chariot. Once they saw that the inside of such a small chariot actually had so much space, they endlessly sighed as they let out praises of admiration.

Suo Jia's abilities had indeed far surpassed everyone's expectations. In such a short amount of time, he had not only created a chariot from scratch, he'd also made a controllable magic automaton. In addition...the tiny-looking chariot actually had 40 ping of space, an unfathomable thought. With this chariot, passing through the Thorn Mice Plains was an easy matter.

Chapter 303 – This Way, As Expected (Part 2)

With the thousand year sandworm monster core driving it, Baltic took steady steps, pulling the giant war chariot stably down the slope. When Nicole, Xiang Yun, and Roger saw how life-like Baltic was, they couldn't believe it was just a machine.

They couldn't really be blamed. If Baltic's shape was humanoid, everyone would definitely tell that its movements were stiff and unnatural. But the issue was, Baltic's lower body was shaped like a spider, so even if its actions weren't natural, one couldn't tell.

Moreover, Baltic's entire body was covered by the thick sandworm skin. The yellow leather looked like a human's skin—this layer of leather was what gave others the feeling of Baltic being alive.

Finally, Baltic pulled the war chariot in front of the swarm of Thorn Mice. Faced against such a large fellow, the Thorn Mice began to wildly shoot out their poisonous needles in an attempt to destroy it.

Inside the carriage, Nicole suddenly perked her ears and asked in confusion, "What's going on? Is it raining outside?"

Suo Jia was stunned by Nicole's words at first, but he then broke out into laughter. He shifted his body slightly to reveal the sole window as he pointed outside, "See for yourself whether it's raining or not."

Nicole looked around his body and outside the window. All she saw was the dense swarm of Thorn Mice, each one wildly shooting its needles at Baltic and the war chariot. The sound of rain was actually the result of the needles striking the leather of the war chariot.

Although the Thorn Mice's needles were sharp, the sandworm

leather was just too tough. Even if the needles were ten times sharper than they were now, it would be no use. Putting aside the war chariot itself, even Baltic was fine as it continued to advance while pulling the war chariot, seemingly not feeling anything. The needles all rebounded off the resilient and flexible sandworm leather, not a single one managing to pierce through.

Nicole suddenly realized that many Thorn Mice were currently jumping onto the shaft with their sharp mouths open, beginning to gnaw at the chariot. This sight caused Nicole to cry out in shock.

Suo Jia's heart couldn't help but skip a beat when he heard Nicole's shout, and he hurriedly pulled her to the side to look. The entire chariot was now crawling with Thorn Mice...those fellows all had their jaws open, chewing at the leather on the chariot with their sharp teeth.

Suo Jia watched anxiously. He knew that if the creatures managed to chew through the leather, he'd have to immediately turn back. Otherwise, the chariot would soon be gnawed down until nothing of it remained.

But fortunately, the sandworm leather didn't disappoint Suo Jia. It was as tenacious as rubber; although the mice's jaws would bite it, the leather would immediately return to its original shape as soon as they slackened their jaws. There weren't even any traces of teeth marks left behind.

Suo Jia let out a breath of relief and passed the responsibility of driving to Nicole. He then turned around to walk to a nearby couch and took out the magic automaton creation book to read.

At the moment, Baltic's movements were being controlled by six rods. Moving forwards, backwards, left, right, jumping, and ducking were done by the six rods extended throughout the inside of the carriage. As long as one sat in the pilot's seat, they would be able to control the movements through the chariot door.

Of course, a true magic automaton didn't require these kinds of

controls. Unfortunately, this didn't qualify yet; it was just a machine. Moreover, it was the most basic, crudest type of magic machine; if one didn't control it, it wouldn't be able to move at all.

Along this trip, the amount of Thorn Mice surrounding them increased more, before decreasing in numbers again. They advanced for an entire day, covering hundreds of kilometers before finally breaking out of Thorn Mice Plains and reaching a riverside.

Suo Jia looked around and saw that while the number of Thorn Mice had drastically decreased, that was only a relative comparison. If they got off now, they'd definitely die.

Suo Jia looked out the window at the surface of the river. Soon... he found a broken bridge not too far away. Although it was broken, Suo Jia manipulated the war chariot so that it headed towards the bridge.

Although the bridge wasn't intact, Suo Jia knew that without it, they'd definitely be unable to pass through. The murky water of the river made it impossible for one to determine its depth. However, it was for certain that it wouldn't have any issue submerging their war chariot.

Suo Jia quickly drove the war chariot to the large stone bridge. When he saw how imposingly vast it was, Suo Jia very much wanted to alight the chariot to inspect it. But the reality of the situation was that if he dared to get off the chariot, he'd immediately be shot into a porcupine by the thorns. Without any other choice, he could only steer the war chariot onto the bridge.

Suo Jia piloted the chariot onto the stone bridge, only stopping once he'd reached the crumbled part of it. He then looked across at the other side. The entire stone bridge was probably hundreds of meters long, but 20 or so meters of the middle part had been snapped off. Unless their war chariot could fly, there was no way they'd be able to cross.

Suo Jia knew that this part of the bridge had definitely been

broken by humans as a result of the mouse plague. If the bridge hadn't been destroyed, the Thorn Mice would've crossed over ages ago.

While Suo Jia was thinking this, a blurry hint of a black figure could be seen swaying on the opposite side. When Suo Jia's group looked closer, an old person's figure slowly appeared on the end of the bridge.

Suo Jia pulled down the chariot window, prepared to shout. But just then, the elder shouted out first, "Oi! The warrior on the other side, block up the Thorn Mice on the bridge behind you. I'll go send people to connect the path and let you guys over!"

Suo Jia was overjoyed at the elder's words. He pulled out the little pet from his interspatial ring and tossed it outside onto the bridge as he said, "Go, herd those mice off the stone bridge. Once we cross, you can fly over!"

The little creature tilted its head and licked its tongue, stubbornly refusing to go. Seeing this, Suo Jia couldn't help but bitterly smile as he pulled out a bunch of refined potions and threw them at the little pet.

It swallowed the refined potions in a single gulp, and closed its eyes in content. After happily nodding at Suo Jia, it ran off towards the back side of the chariot. As it bounded over, layers of Glacial Armor appeared over its body one after another. In an instant, the gigantic Diamond Dragon appeared once more!

Soon, the Diamond Dragon's destruction caused the Thorn Mice to miserably run off the stone bridge. At the same time, a dozen youths appeared on the opposite side, pushing two meter long wooden boards to stretch across the gap.

Although the stone bridge was broken, the bridge pier was still there. The 20 meter distance had a total of four bridge piers. Once the strong layers of wooden boards were laid out, the youths waved at Suo Jia from the opposite side, gesturing at him to cross.

Although he was concerned about whether or not these wooden boards would be able to hold up under the war chariot's weight, Suo Jia no longer had any other options. He clenched his teeth and drove the chariot forwards, directly steering it onto the wooden boards that had been hastily laid out.

Luckily, everything went smoothly. The chariot successfully drove over to the opposite side. The dozen youths then retracted the boards, and after the last one had been pulled away, Suo Jia commanded the Diamond Dragon to return.

The elder and his companions led Suo Jia's group towards a village on this side of the stone bridge. Along the way, Suo Jia learned from the elder that this village was a relay station responsible for handling adventurer matters on the Greater Trade Routes, a place specifically responsible for receiving adventurers from various countries.

From the elder's words, Suo Jia was able to confirm Nicole's guess; the opposite side of the river had indeed suffered from a mouse plague. Moreover, it had already been over half a year since it had happened. During this period of time, Suo Jia's group was the only adventurer group that had managed to successfully pass through Thorn Mice Plains and reach this relay station!

That wasn't all; Suo Jia was able to learn some more shocking news from the elder. Not only were the people that entered the Greater Trade Routes blocked outside, but many people that attempted to leave the Greater Trade Routes were also blocked off inside the relay station. At the moment, there were already dozens of groups stuck here. It was precisely due to this reason that the elder had actively helped put up the bridge after seeing Suo Jia arrive. Otherwise, Suo Jia could've yelled for help for an entire night without someone necessarily noticing.

Chapter 304 – Unimaginable Horror (Part 1)

The old man led Suo Jia's party of four into the relay station. This relay station was actually just a small village of around 200 residents. Although it didn't look big, it had every amenity: a blacksmith, a miscellaneous goods shop, an inn...it was extremely complete.

Suo Jia's party followed the old man. They entered the village by following a dividing limestone road. Although it was already evening, there were idle crowds packed on either side of the road. They were gathered into groups of three or two, observing Suo Jia's party through the corners of their eyes.

Nicole didn't pay any mind to these strangers' gazes. Xiang Yun, whom possessed a bestial-like instinct, had his right hand at his waist with a serious expression on his face. It was clear to see that...Suo Jia and Xiang Yun both felt dark murderous intent from the crowds on the roadsides.

Suo Jia's and Xiang Yun's raised guards clearly didn't escape the elder's observation. He frowned, and suddenly shouted toward the crowds on the roadsides, "All of you, go the f*ck back to your rooms and stay there! If the visitors are frightened off, I'll definitely halve your provisions tonight!"

The people on the roadsides slowly began to turn their bodies after having heard the elder's words. They dispersed after giving Suo Jia's party one last glance. With only a bit of effort, the road regained its quietness; not a single human figure could be seen.

"Bunch of trash..." The elder cursed in anger and contempt as he looked off in the direction the crowds had disappeared towards.

Suo Jia frowned in confusion. "Mister, what's up with those guys? They..."

"Hmph!" The elder snorted in disdain and used his surprisingly

loud and clear voice to say, “Those guys already lost their courage, trash that don’t dare to continue adventuring the Greater Trade Routes. They’ve been scared shitless, and now they just want to hurry back to the human world to save their petty lives.”

Suo Jia understood the elder’s words. These guys had originally wanted to return to the starting point of the Greater Trade Routes, but due to the obstruction of the Thorn Mice, they couldn’t embark on their journey. Thus, they could only be firmly blocked off here.

The elder gloomily said, “Youngsters, coming here means you’ve already stepped onto the Greater Trade Routes. There are no rules or laws here. You guys need to be careful, those people aren’t good figures. They do pretty much anything!”

“Huh?” Nicole shot a puzzled look at the elder and asked, “Isn’t this place a relay station? They shouldn’t dare to do whatever they want, right? Otherwise, why didn’t they just all come at us together?”

The elder glanced at Nicole and said in a heavy voice, “Those bastards only keep me in consideration. As long as I’m here, they really don’t dare to do anything. But once I’m not, they’ll stop caring. You guys must be careful, even a relay station is not safe. Not a single corner on the Greater Trade Routes is safe!”

“Hehe...” With a dark smile, Xiang Yun ravenously licked his tongue before excitedly saying, “Captain, you really found the best place. This kind of location can’t be any more well suited for my diet. It looks like...we probably won’t be lonesome anymore!”

“Tch...” Suo Jia tilted his head back to yawn in disdain. “Since you’re so excited, you can take watch tonight. No matter what happens, don’t call me.”

Suo Jia turned around to look at the elder and lazily said, “Mister, please arrange places for us to live and eat. We haven’t slept properly on a bed in ages.”

“Um...” The elder looked at Suo Jia in astonishment and hesitated. “Young friend, you guys shouldn’t be careless. Although those people were scared shitless, their strengths are just as overpowering. It was just that...the thing that scared them was just too mighty.”

As soon as the elder finished speaking, Xiang Yun happily continued, “The more I listen to you, the more excited I get! Quick, hurry up, where exactly are we living at? I’m already unable to wait any longer to meet those so-called experts!”

The elder couldn’t help but sigh as he saw Xiang Yun’s reckless expression. The elder brought Suo Jia’s party to a limestone building, and pulled out a key from his pocket. As he passed it to Suo Jia, he said, “While you are at this relay station, you guys can live in this stone building. There’s no other option...the inn was filled ages ago.”

Suo Jia casually accepted the key and sincerely replied, “Then thank you very much, Mister.”

“Mhm...” The elder nodded anxiously and said in a heavy voice, “My home is next to the village’s east gate. If they come to stir trouble with you guys, you can send someone to call me, or run in that direction. As long as you flee to my place, nobody will dare to touch you guys!”

“Hehe...” Suo Jia smiled gratefully and said, “Don’t worry, Mister. Since we dared to enter the Greater Trade Routes, there’s no way we’d fear any challenge. If those people are reckless enough to really come here, we won’t have mercy!”

As soon as Suo Jia finished speaking, Xiang Yun added, “That’s right, old man, if I try killing someone here, will anyone interfere? It’s not illegal to kill here right?”

The elder shook his head bitterly and stated, “On the Greater Trade Routes, laws are dictated by experts. As long as you win, you are the law. As for whether or not people will interfere, who

knows? If someone tried to kill your companion, would you interfere?”

Xiang Yun nodded in understanding and gave a strange smile. “Thank you very much, old man. I understand what you mean. Whoever has larger fists is the law, right?”

“Yes...” The elder firmly nodded, and shot Xiang Yun a bemused look, “That’s right, that is the meaning. However...I stick by my previous words; you must be extra careful about everything. The Greater Trade Routes is definitely nowhere close to anything you could ever imagine!”

The elder stared deeply at Suo Jia’s party. He knew that he’d already done his best, if they didn’t go through any major hardships, they wouldn’t understand how terrifying the Greater Trade Routes were. Thus, he helplessly turned around and began to walk towards the east side of the village.

After bidding farewell to the elder, Suo Jia’s party entered the stone house. Suo Jia, Nicole, and Xiang Yun began to organize their luggage, spreading out bed covers, while Roger began to prepare dinner.

Roger was indeed worthy of being the descendent of a legendary family of chefs. His work was so high quality that Suo Jia and the other two almost ate their own tongues while wolfing the food down. After they’d eaten until they were beyond full, they all cleaned up. The three of them then fell asleep, leaving only Xiang Yun to keep watch.

Xiang Yun couldn’t help but smile at the sight of his three companions in deep sleep on the wooden beds. The more he interacted with them, the more he felt the warmth of friendship. To someone like him that had been a wanderer for so long, such a feeling was too precious.

Xiang Yun pulled out a cushion from his interspatial ring and sat cross-legged at the entrance. He quietly controlled his breathing,

waiting for the so-called trouble that the elder had claimed would happen.

It was obvious that the elder understood those people too well. Time passed, and once the curtain of darkness had completely fallen, the clear sound of footsteps rang out from the limestone house. Xiang Yun frowned, and listened attentively. The sound of footsteps was clearly headed towards this stone house.

Xiang Yun excitedly opened his eyes, and lightly stood up from his cushion to check his body's condition. Without question, Xiang Yun was currently in his optimal state. Qi circulated throughout his entire body. He almost wanted to immediately find an opponent and break out into a fierce fight.

Xiang Yun tightened his belt, tidied his clothes, and gently pushed open the door. Outside, under the reflection of the moonlight, a group of black figures were gathering at the stone house from both sides of the path.

Xiang Yun took a deep breath, and softly stepped outside the room. He then quietly closed the door. He didn't want to shock his sleeping companions awake; he would deal with these guys!

Chapter 305 – Unimaginable Horror (Part 2)

“Whoosh...whoosh...whoosh...” Over 20 hazy figures gathered from either side of the road. By the time they stopped moving, all of the figures just happened to have halted in front of Xiang Yun, tightly surrounding him.

Using the moonlight, Xiang Yun carefully surveyed the people in front of him. Their getup was very strange; some used sabres, others used swords, there were bows, and even staffs as well. However...although they were all dressed differently, there was a slight similarity they all shared. These people were all vaguely emitting a chilling murderous aura! It was very clear, very obvious, to the point where it seemed like one could physically touch it.

Of course, the murderous aura wasn't all they shared. More importantly, although these people were filled with killing intent, they gave off feelings of dejection as well. Their eyes in particular had been listless since the beginning.

As Xiang Yun was sizing them up, a tall and sturdy figure opposite him stepped out and coldly declared, “Hey! If you don't want to die a horrible death, hand over your chariot! Otherwise...” The tall and sturdy figure slowly raised his right hand and clenched it into a tight fist, emitting ear-grinding cracks.

Xiang Yun looked coldly at the person threatening him, feeling like he'd just suffered from the greatest embarrassment. A group of trash that had lost their guts actually dared to threaten him, how despicable!

Xiang Yun took a deep breath to suppress his rage and prevent it from bursting. He said in a low voice, “Hey! You cowardly bastards, did you think I was as useless as you guys? If you want the chariot, it's fine, but...you have to beat me first!”

Xiang Yun had thought that if he spoke so rudely, the other party

would definitely unsheathe their blades and face him. However, contrary to his expectations, the tall and sturdy person didn't get angry. Instead, he said in a deep voice, "Youngster, just showing off your tongue is useless. Since you want to fight so badly, then I'll just accompany you. Come at me..."

The tall and sturdy figure abruptly clapped his hands together. Then...his arms suddenly stretched out in opposite directions. At the same time, a string of metallic clanging sounds rang out as ten sharp and piercing claw blades shot out from the back of his hands. In a mere instant, ten 20 centimeter long, penetrating and sharp claw blades combined to form only two incisive talons.

"Kiang! Kiang..." The tall and sturdy figure slightly opened his hands to reveal the claws, and he lifelessly intoned, "Youngster, I'll give you one last chance. If you directly hand the chariot over to us, I can let you go. Otherwise, once we start fighting, I won't be able to control myself!"

Xiang Yun stared hard at those sharp, metal claws in the figure's hands. He didn't doubt their sharpness, and the claws matched the person's long arms and the solidness of his body. Once he attacked, it would be like a barbarous, big bear! This definitely wouldn't be easy to defeat!

Xiang Yun's right hand silently rose upwards and back towards the seven weapons on his back. As he analyzed the opponent opposite him, Xiang Yun's hand was moving along the tops of the seven hilts.

Finally, Xiang Yun's eyes lit up, and his right hand suddenly gripped the second war blade from the right. His right arm abruptly yanked upwards, and with a fierce shing, the war blade was finally unsheathed.

Faced against the opposite party's unique traits, Xiang Yun chose the Chasm Moon Blade. The Chasm Moon Blade's main characteristic was how wide and thick its blade was. Although it

wasn't sharp enough, its swings were very powerful. Moreover... its expansive body had powerful defensive abilities that could go against the top half of a shield!

In a practiced matter, Xiang Yun looked at the wide sabre in his hand as he loudly declared, "This blade's name is Chasm Moon Blade, and uses the Chasm Moon Blade Techniques. Let's fight..."

Hearing this, the tall and sturdy figure that had been standing there the whole time with his head lowered suddenly raised it. A pair of slender eyes suddenly grew round, and red veins instantly filled the whites of his eyes.

"Hya!" With a bestial roar, the tall and sturdy figure suddenly opened wide his giant, ape-like arms, and his legs quickly cycled around as he charged towards Xiang Yun like a wild bear.

Although Xiang Yun had vaguely realized before that people able to enter the Greater Trade Routes definitely weren't simple, he'd been careless. He hadn't imagined that someone that looked so large would have such agile movements. In a flash, the opponent had covered a distance of 20 meters, and appeared 2 meters in front of Xiang Yun.

Faced against the sudden arrival of the attack, Xiang Yun only had the time to hold the Chasm Moon Blade horizontally across his chest before the opponent's attack hit its mark. A string of fierce clashing sounds followed as the opposite party's long and pointy claws slashed at Xiang Yun's Chasm Moon Blade many times in succession, as fast as lightning. For a moment, Xiang Yun could only bitterly block, completely unable to find a chance to counter!

"Hiss...hiss..." A defense would reveal holes after a long enough time. Finally...after blocking the dozens of slashes with all his might, Xiang Yun exposed a gap; a fraction of his chest was wide open. In an instant, the opposite party's claws flashed as they bore inwards. Two bone-deep cuts on Xiang Yun's right chest and left rib were left behind. The boiling blood instantly gushed out from

Xiang Yun's body; in the blink of an eye, Xiang Yun's shirt was soaked crimson.

The tall and sturdy figure didn't continue attacking. After that strike, the figure used an unimaginably nimble style of movement to quickly retreat and arrogantly stand in his original spot as he coldly looked at Xiang Yun.

Xiang Yun gripped his chest wounds in agony as he stared at the figure opposite him in shock. He said in disbelief, "If your strength is this powerful, why are you scared to the point where you must leave!"

The person couldn't help but shudder a few times. With the aid of the moonlight, Xiang Yun could clearly see the opposite party's facial muscles distort and twitch a few times, an expression of terror reflected in their eyes. The person seemed to have recalled some incomparably frightening experience.

After a long while, the figure replied in a low voice, "Youngster, you're too tender. Perhaps my strength already seems very powerful in your eyes, but in reality, these people in front of you are each around the same level as me!"

"What!" Xiang Yun's expression couldn't help but change in shock. He looked around at the 20 some figures lifelessly standing there and looking at him with apathetic gazes. Could it be that...all these guys had such horrifying strength?

The person then continued, "Actually, we're just the representatives from all the adventure groups at this relay station. Currently, over a hundred people live here, and they all possess strengths no weaker than mine. Those with strength levels just the slightest bit lower died ages ago. How could they possibly live in this kind of place!"

"Heavens!" Xiang Yun shot a stunned look at the one opposite him and asked incredulously, "This is too hard to believe. You're telling me that...there are really so many experts like this on the

Greater Trade Routes?”

“Experts?” The figure gave a puzzled look at Xiang Yun and fiercely shook his head. “No, no, no...we still can’t be counted as experts. In reality, we’ve only passed through the second checkpoint. Before we reached the third checkpoint, we encountered him!”

“Him?” Xiang Yun knit his brows in confusion.

“Yea...” Fearfully nodding, the tall and sturdy figure shakingly said, “That’s right, it’s that terrifying fellow. Back then...we were entrapped by 400 or more people, but he alone managed to murder over 300 people.”

“What!” Xiang Yun looked at his counterpart in astonishment and doubtfully said, “What did you say? A single person was able to murder over 300 people, including you guys?”

The tall and sturdy figure shakily nodded and said in a terror-stricken voice, “That’s right...it was exactly so. Too terrifying! You didn’t witness it, so you will never be able to imagine just how horrible he is. He wasn’t just killing people there, he was slaughtering them. I can’t ever even hope to forget such a terrible scene in my lifetime!”

Hearing this guy’s words, the surrounding 20 some people all began to tremble as well. It was obvious that those words had made them recall the events that had occurred that day. The memory alone was enough to scare them to this point.

Xiang Yun looked at the crowds of people around him, not daring to believe this. Just what kind of methods could frighten these guys like this? Unless...did a demon king truly exist in this world? Aside from a demon king, who else could possess this kind of ability?

Chapter 306 – To Reach Agreement (Part 1)

The tall and sturdy figure shakingly said, “Alright, I’ve already answered everything you’ve asked. The fight has already finished as well. Now...you should be willing to hand the chariot over, right?”

Xiang Yun was stunned for a moment before he began to laugh out loud. Shaking his head, he said, “What are you talking about! Aren’t I perfectly fine? As long as I’m still conscious, I definitely won’t admit defeat!”

“Tch...” The tall and sturdy figure tsked in disdain at Xiang Yun’s words. “Youngster, bravery and belligerence are useless. Before, I was even fiercer than you were. Although I was afraid of that guy, it doesn’t mean I’m afraid of you. Since you’re seeking death, I’ll help you out.” The person suddenly struck out with his claws, his arms slowly opening wide as his body charged forwards...

Seeing the opposite party about to attack, Xiang Yun said in contempt, “Hey! I advise you to just leave. You can’t possibly beat me. In reality, you’ve already lost your will to fight. The only reason you’re still fighting is because you want to obtain the chariot from me so that you can run away. A person without any fighting intent can’t possibly beat me, Xiang Yun, no matter how excellent your battle skills are!”

Xiang Yun’s hands simultaneously gripped the hilt and he coldly locked gazes with the other party, “I, Xiang Yun, can lose. However, even if I die, I won’t allow myself to lose in the hands of some cowardly person here. That’s a humiliation that I can’t possibly bear!”

It was impossible to endure Xiang Yun’s taunts, no matter how good one’s temper was. Xiang Yun’s words were undoubtedly piercing the opposite party’s weak points. In an instant, the tall and sturdy figure roared in anger, threw his arms open wide, and

shot outwards like electricity...

“Yah!” With a strange shout, the figure waved his long arms around and wildly attacked as fast as lightning. His claws arranged in a sky-filling claw net that tried to enshroud Xiang Yun.

Faced against the claw’s after-images that filled the air, Xiang Yun refused to retreat. He clenched his teeth and suddenly jumped high up in the air, the Chasm Moon Blade raised above his head. With a flash of yellow light, it slashed at the claw after-images with all its might.

“Clang!” With a fierce sound of metal on metal, the claw after-images immediately disappeared. Xiang Yun’s Chasm Moon Blade accurately hacked at the other party’s right claw. However, it only managed to block it; the right claw drew an arc in the air lightning-fast, horizontally coming at Xiang Yun’s unprotected lower abdomen area.

Xiang Yun saw the quickly approaching claw blades, and knew that if those swept across him, he’d probably be sliced in half. He gritted his teeth and channeled power through his hands to rebound his war blade off the opponent’s right claw, his body spinning away in the direction the claw blade was pushed off towards.

“Clang!” The fierce sound of collision could be heard as the opponent’s claw violently slashed at the stone wall behind Xiang Yun. Immediately...the five sharp claw blades left five deep scars dozens of centimeters long in the hard limestone. The incisions were as flat and smooth as mirrors.

Although the claws had missed, the figure seemed to have already encountered this before. He raised his right hand high, earth-shatteringly chopping down at Xiang Yun, who’d just evaded to the right. Xiang Yun could only flip outwards in response to the swift attacks. The claw blade brushed past Xiang Yun’s body and deeply embedded itself into the limestone. Of the 20 centimeter

long claw blades, a dozen or so centimeters were not buried underneath the stone.

Seeing Xiang Yun dodge his attacks one after another, the tall and sturdy man seemed to grow angry. His body moved like a ghost, chasing after Xiang Yun's figure. His sharp claws shot outwards over and over again. In a mere moment, the surrounding walls and the limestone floor all sported deep scars.

Finally...Xiang Yun's somersaulted forwards, using his right palm to push off the floor. His body soared upwards, and after a few consecutive flips, re-landed in front of the house.

The tall and study figure silently retracted his claws and slowly turned around. He looked down at Xiang Yun and said, "Youngster, you won't find any way out if you just keep dodging like this. Look at your wound, how much more blood can you lose?"

Lightly touching the claw marks on his lower abdomen area, Xiang Yun nonchalantly said, "You don't need to worry about that. I've gotten used to this kind of minor wound ages ago. Hehe... rather, after all this time, you still haven't defeated me. Are you not concerned at all?"

"What?" The tall and sturdy figure looked at Xiang Yun in confusion and asked, "What are you saying? What do I need to be worried about? In my opinion, in just a bit, you'll faint from blood loss. To me, victory is easily obtainable!"

"Hehe..." Xiang Yun gave a dark smile and smugly declared, "Although I can't strike you, I've completely seen through your moves, and completely grasped your traits. I can defeat you in only three moves!"

The tall and sturdy person was stunned for a moment, before he threw his head back and laughed out loud. He gasped for breath as he said, "Hey! There's no way you can defeat anyone just by bragging. If you really have this ability, then stop dodging, and

fight me properly by meeting force with force!”

Xiang Yun slightly raised his Chasm Moon Blade and smiled, “If you want to fight, then come on over and attack. I didn’t ask you to stop!”

“Tch...” The opponent’s body suddenly lowered, and his arms opened towards the left this time. His legs cycled forwards like a mirage, and he came leaping towards Xiang Yun at an amazingly fast speed once more!

Seeing an opponent burst forwards in attack so wildly, Xiang Yun’s gaze suddenly shifted upwards. His hands tightly gripped the sabre hilt as he chopped down to disperse the opponent’s claw mirages that filled the air. The sequence of attacks and stances were exactly the same as before!

“Tch...” The tall and sturdy guy curled his lip in disdain. His right claw reached forwards, while his left claw sped towards Xiang Yun’s right side. This time, he definitely wouldn’t allow Xiang Yun to dodge!

“Bang!” Xiang Yun chopped down at the opponent’s right claw once more, however, this time was different. The Chasm Moon Blade only just touched the right claw, but with a flash of yellow light, the Chasm Moon Blade suddenly retracted. The blade turned 180 degrees, the upward slash transforming into a downward one.

The tall and sturdy figure was suddenly motionless, his left claw shakily stopped at his body’s left side. It wasn’t that he didn’t want to move, but that he didn’t dare to. Currently...the point of Xiang Yun’s Chasm Moon Blade was at his throat. The lightest bit of pressure would be enough to pierce his throat and completely kill him off.

The tall and sturdy fellow gave an incredulous stare at the extremely close-by Xiang Yun, and stated in shock, “How did you do it? My right claw clearly came into contact with your war blade, didn’t it?”

Xiang Yun leisurely looked at his opponent. Only he knew the sabre's secret. Putting aside the attack that had rolled back or how fast it was, the explosive yellow light was enough to blind any person. Nobody could see where the sabre was unfurled from.

It was actually quite simple; it was just utilizing borrowed power and clever methods to take advantage of the opponent's force to allow the blade to reverse itself from an upward to a downward slash. It could also change from a left chop to a right slash, but one's actions had to be much faster.

After so many years of training, Xiang Yun could already shrink the gap between the two blades in less than 0.2 seconds, which had already far surpassed the limits of human vision. It was something that the naked eye couldn't possibly catch. To the enemy, this Chasm Moon Blade was actually two sabres. There was no way one could sense the time gap between the first and second strikes of the attack. In reality, this attack that was impossible to follow with the eyes was the most powerful.

The person watched Xiang Yun heave his sabre downwards. Actually, defense wasn't only for the upper part, but the lower part as well. Otherwise, how would one block when the war blade was curling back?

Furthermore, the Chasm Moon Blade Technique had to fully utilize the Chasm Moon Blade's arched blade suitable for rapidly changing directions. In addition...the blade's body would emit a fierce yellow light when attacking, which cleverly and seamlessly concealed it. No matter how good one's eyesight was, they most definitely wouldn't be able to see through this clever mystery.

Xiang Yun chirped, "You only saw the full moon in the sky, but you didn't realize that the same, bright moon was suspended underneath the water. How could you block that!"

Actually, the name alone already explained the clever mysteries of this move. The Chasm Moon Blade was naturally like a moon in

a well's killing potential. The blade out in the open was meant to draw one's attention. Once the person was intercepting that blade, a blade hidden in a secret location would instantly take their life.

Xiang Yun re-sheathed his war blade, and leaned on it as he smiled at the tall and sturdy fellow, "Don't think about it anymore, the results of this battle aren't something you can understand just by pondering it. Since you've already lost, I think...that you shouldn't continue staying around here!"

Chapter 307 – To Reach Agreement (Part 2)

“Tch...” The person helplessly said through gritted teeth, “Alright. I just won’t participate in this matter anymore. However...I only represent myself. I can’t make decisions for any other people.”

“What!” Xiang Yun shouted in shock, “What’s that? You’re clearly cheating! We’ve already finished fighting, and only now you tell me you can’t represent everyone else. Why did I bother fighting with you!”

The tall and sturdy figure awkwardly rubbed his head and said in embarrassment, “You can’t blame me for that. I never said that I could represent everyone. From the beginning to the end, you were the one saying it. Think back, you were the one that said as long as you won, you’d hand the chariot over to us. You never said what would happen if I lost!”

“That...” Xiang Yun couldn’t help but sweat at this. That’s right...the reality was indeed like so. The other party really hadn’t said that he’d lead everyone away if he’d lost.

“Hey! What time do you think it is, just because you guys aren’t sleeping doesn’t mean you should interrupt others’ sleep, ok?” While Xiang Yun was unable to speak, a lazy voice rang out from behind him.

Hearing this, everyone curiously looked behind Xiang Yun and saw that the wooden door behind him had opened at some point. The drowsy-eyed Suo Jia was currently standing there with an impatient expression, muttering something.

After glancing at Xiang Yun, Suo Jia furrowed his brows and said, “What’s wrong with you? It’s only been a short while since I’d last seen you, yet you’re covered in blood. That’s right...whose blood is that? Is it yours or the enemy’s?”

“Hehe...” Xiang Yun chuckled in embarrassment and said, “It’s mine. I was careless just now and got scratched...”

Suo Jia frowned and slightly stretched out his right hand. A blue glow flashed a few times, and immediately afterwards...Xiang Yun felt a refreshing feeling disperse outwards from his wound.

Sensing the circumstances of his wound, Xiang Yun’s eyes lit up. He excitedly raised his head and said to the surrounding people, “Aha...alright, since you guys want to fight, then come at me. I’ll accept all of you!”

“Pa!” As soon as Xiang Yun finished speaking, Suo Jia unrestrainedly punched Xiang Yun’s head and said angrily, “You bastard, can you stop constantly thinking of fighting? Even if you aren’t sleeping, others are. Even if Roger and I can handle it, do you think Nicole can?”

Xiang Yun stuck out his tongue in shame, and didn’t dare say he’d continue fighting. Just as Suo Jia had said, Nicole was a female after all, and didn’t have the same resistance to sleeplessness that men did.

Suo Jia could tell that Xiang Yun had admitted his wrongs judging from his attitude, and he nodded in satisfaction. He turned around and said to the surrounding crowd, “Don’t bother encircling this place any longer. It’s impossible for us to give you the chariot, as we still need to use it. If you want to fight, do it again in the daytime. I won’t care if you all come together, or do individual challenges. It’ll be up to you!”

With this, Suo Jia dragged Xiang Yun back into the room. The crowd of people watched the house door get heavily shut, and couldn’t help but fall silent. After a long while, the tall and sturdy fellow said, “The brat is right. Even if we want the chariot, we can wait until tomorrow morning.” Everyone nodded, and the encirclement silently dispersed.

The next afternoon, Suo Jia’s group finally woke up from their

deep sleep. After eating the bountiful lunch Roger prepared, Suo Jia led Roger, Xiang Yun, and Nicole towards the village's small square, No matter what, the chariot matter had to be resolved.

By the time Suo Jia's party had reached the square, hundreds of lodging adventurers had already gathered. When they saw Suo Jia's party arrive, they all swarmed around.

Since he was familiar with them, the tall and sturdy fellow was pushed into become the representative again. He quickly walked up to Suo Jia and said, "Let's not bother with pointless blabber. Just say it straight out, what must we do for you to be willing to hand the chariot over to us?"

"Papapa..." Suo Jia clapped in praise, "Words well spoken. If you wanted our chariot, all we had to do was properly discuss it. Using force can't resolve it. Otherwise, you would only end up with a broken chariot."

The surrounding crowds couldn't help but gasp at Suo Jia's words. Indeed...Suo Jia had the chance to destroy the chariot. Although there were blacksmiths in the village, they couldn't possibly repair magic automatons. Without the automaton pulling it, how would the carriage alone be of any use?

Suo Jia was pleased when he saw everyone's expressions. He knew that these guys wouldn't dare to pull any more schemes. As long as they wanted to return, they had to sit down and properly discuss it.

Suo Jia opened his mouth to say, "We still need to use this chariot later, so we cannot hand it over. However...I can be responsible for using the chariot to escort you guys back!"

"Ah!" Everyone cried out in joy. Suo Jia looked at their excited expressions and continued, "Even if I gave this chariot to you guys, you would be unable to support it once you hit the desert. Thus, it doesn't at all matter whether or not I give the chariot to you. But..."

Suo Jia paused halfway before chuckling, “We can help you guys, but we are neither relatives or friends. We haven’t even had any business transactions before. Since you want us to help, shouldn’t you pay some price?”

“Price?” A bearded man from the crowd looked at Suo Jia curiously and asked, “What kind of price do you want us to pay? Money?”

“Yeah...” Suo Jia nodded and firmly stated, “That’s right. Since you guys want to leave the Greater Trade Routes, keeping so much of the Trade Route currency is meaningless. You might as well leave them with us. As for currency from the outside world, there’s no reason to be afraid of being unable to earn it with your abilities, right?”

“No problem!” The bearded man nodded and resolutely declared, “We’ve already discussed it. When we leave this time, we’ll work together to create a super empire. We’re all nobles, so money is something we’ve never lacked!”

Seeing that the opposing party actually agreed, Suo Jia was extremely pleased. He took a deep breath to quell the excitement in his heart and continued, “Also, judging from your emblems, everyone’s mostly the boss from their group. Thus, I believe that you guys must know many secrets about the other three checkpoints. I hope that when you leave, you’ll leave these secrets behind, hehe...I’m not sure if...”

Before Suo Jia had finished speaking, the tall and sturdy fellow interrupted, “Not a problem. Either way, we’re not coming back. Since you want to know, we’ll just tell you. However, like this, doesn’t it seem too favorable to you guys?”

Suo Jia wryly shook his head and said weakly, “This counts as being too favorable for us? There are over 100 of you guys. Actually, I feel that you guys are the advantageous ones.”

Everyone pondered Suo Jia’s words. They knew that if he didn’t

help, they wouldn't be able to return within the next 1-2 years, and they'd just end up wasting their time here. In that case, they might as well return earlier. With their skills, they'd be able to earn back any price they paid by severalfold within 1-2 years.

The issue now was that they were requesting something from Suo Jia, not the other way around. If Suo Jia didn't think it was worth it, Suo Jia would simply not cooperate. While this didn't affect him, it was impossible for the adventurers to pay no mind to something like this happening. If Suo Jia didn't help, who knew how much longer they'd be stuck here for.

Chapter 308 – Energy Shield Pt. 1

Those that could return to this relay station alive were unexpectedly experts. They were all leaders of a group. Just as they said, if they didn't have some level of strength, there was no way they'd get the chance to run back, and would've long since died halfway through their journey back.

They'd only passed three checkpoints, moreover, they hadn't actually passed through the third one. However, these guys had already wandered around the Greater Trade Routes for over a year. They had plenty of experience, and their strengths were domineering. Moreover, they also had very extensive knowledge.

Suo Jia managed to gather 100,000 Trade Route coins from the hundreds of people. When Suo Jia looked at the large chest of brown Trade Route coins that had a strange map printed on them, he began to question...after living on the Greater Trade Routes for all this time, they only had this little amount of money? Each person had only handed over 1000 coins.

Seeing Suo Jia's doubtful and suspicious expression, the bearded man lightly coughed and said in a suppressed voice, "Perhaps you don't believe that we only have the little money, but this is the reality. This currency has a wide range of uses, which you'll come to know later. Nobody overstocks too much on the money in their hands. We're more used to changing this money into our own body's strength!"

"Changing it into strength?" Suo Jia was stunned at these words.

The bearded man said to the shocked Suo Jia, "Don't tell me you really don't know? The reason the Greater Trade Routes is a paradise that all warriors dream of is because there are mystical magic fruits here. These fruits can bestow humans some abilities, or increase their strength in a particular area. These coins are the only type of currency that can purchase these magic fruits!"

“Heavens!” Suo Jia excitedly looked at the bearded man and exclaimed, “Then hurry up and say. I was wondering why you guys only had so little money, it seems like you all bought magic fruits. Hurry up and tell me, what kinds of magic fruits are there?”

“Hehe...” The bearded man smiled and said, “The magic fruits are split into 3, 6, 9 ranks. Rank 1 magic fruits are cheap, and only require 1000 coins. However, the amount they can boost is pretty small, and the energy it provides is relatively weak. The highest seems to be rank 10, which is said to bestow a deity-like ability and power to humans!”

The bearded man paused for a bit, then continued, “Also, aside from the magic fruits, the Greater Trade Routes also produces Illusion Gems. After getting a hold of these gems, you can find a specialized smith to strengthen your equipment with these gems. Even a set of the most ordinary equipment can become terrifyingly powerful with enough Illusion Gems embedded!”

After hearing the bearded man’s words, Suo Jia was so excited that he didn’t know what to say. He impatiently urged, “Don’t just talk about the benefits. The only thing I want to know now is, where do I have to go to get these things?”

“Mmm...” The bearded man muttered to himself for a bit before saying, “Normally, people purchase them from the indigenous people that live on the Greater Trade Routes. You must also know that the Greater Trade Routes are far too vast. Aside from the locals, how would any outsiders know where these originate from?”

The bearded man smiled and said, “Of course, if you guys are an adventurer group, then just forget about it. Going out on adventures, you will occasionally encounter magic trees that grow magic fruits, or you can find hidden Illusion Gem mines. That’s why the adventurer groups are extremely domineering on the Greater Trade Routes! They take up over 60%!”

“Heavens!” Suo Jia stared in shock at the bearded man. He found it very hard to believe that most of the people on the Greater Trade Routes were adventurer groups. Out of every 10 groups, 6 would be adventurer groups!

Suo Jia asked questioningly, “Why is it so disproportional? If that were true, what exactly are the statistics for the types of groups on the Greater Trade Routes?”

“Hmm...” After pondering it for a bit, the bearded man firmly stated, “Out of a total of 10 groups, 6 of them are adventurer groups, 3 of them are thief groups, and the last 10% are mercenary groups, knight groups, and others.”

“Heavens!” Suo Jia couldn’t help but gasp at the man’s words. Wasn’t that too overboard? Adventurer and thief groups actually took up 90%, and the remaining were all mercenary, merchant, and stuff like knight groups!

Suo Jia tentatively asked, “Um...can I ask something? How many merchant groups are on the Greater Trade Routes?”

“Merchant group!” The bearded man looked at Suo Jia in astonishment and confusion, “How could merchant groups appear on the Greater Trade Routes? Those that are able to reach here are all burly old lords, all warriors. Who would go and become a merchant! Would a good merchant have the qualifications to visit here?”

Suo Jia wordlessly looked at the bearded man, and after a long time, bitterly smiled, “How could there be none. We’re a merchant group!”

“That...” The bearded man was covered with cold sweat as he replied with difficulty, “Hehe...that’s really rare. I’ve been moving around the Greater Trade Routes for nearly 3 years, but this is the first time I’ve met...oh, no! This is the first time I’ve ever heard of a merchant group here.”

The bearded man lightly patted Suo Jia's shoulders, and after some hesitation, firmly declared, "Brother, you still have the time to change it now. You can immediately request the relay station to send a letter back to Loze City, and you can change it. Let me tell you, the Greater Trade Routes is vast, but sparsely populated. There isn't much business you can do. It's best if you don't bother wasting your time."

The bearded man gave one last pat and then turned around to leave. Suo Jia could only blankly stare at the man's back. After a long while, Suo Jia firmly curled his hands into fists. No matter what, he wouldn't change from his original intention. With effort, one could achieve anything. If there were people, there were markets. If there were markets, there was business. Looking at it....the name was Greater Trade Routes, so how could one not be a merchant?

After several days, Suo Jia organized everyone's information. Just like previously stated, majority of them were adventurer groups. They had pretty much probed out and memorized where villages and special products were at the previous 3 checkpoints.

Why did these guys work together and honestly announce their information? It was because even if they wanted to lie, they didn't dare to. As an adventurer group, they needed to find a certain objective at each checkpoint to have the qualifications. Although each group received a different target to search for, there were always some repeats. Once one lied, it would immediately be identified.

Having received the other party's money as well as the information they'd painstakingly gathered and organized, it was naturally Suo Jia's turn to help them. During the next week, Suo Jia went back and forth six times. Once all the adventurers that had been blocked off at the relay station had been escorted to the edge of Tagan Desert, everything else was up to them.

After sending off every single person, the village returned to its

previous peacefulness. This kind of environment was indeed very comforting and cozy, but it definitely didn't suit Xiang Yun, Roger, and Nicole for long. They each urged Suo Jia to hurry up and continue onwards on their journey.

Although they had already stepped into the beginning of the Greater Trade Routes, they were strictly speaking not yet at the starting point. If they wanted to see the wonders of the Greater Trade Routes, they had to leave the relay station and head forwards.

However, Suo Jia rejected their pleas, and chose to temporarily live at the relay station. He even repeatedly warned Xiang Yun and Roger to properly revise their fighting skills, and not just constantly think about going to experience some kind of landscape.

After making arrangements for the three of them, Suo Jia called Nicole over. As he flipped through the information and data left behind from those guys, Nicole was trying to draw a map based on the information.

The Greater Trade Routes actually did have a map, Nicole had one in her hands. However, that was drawn by her predecessor. Everyone knew that human ability had its limits after all. Drawing it too detailed was definitely impossible.

However, it was different now. With the help of those hundreds of groups, Suo Jia had pretty much gathered all information and news about the first three checkpoints. What Suo Jia needed to do now was to portray it onto a detailed map of the Greater Trade Routes. Each village, specialized place, and representative locations were marked.

After wasting an entire month, Suo Jia finally completed the map markings of the first three checkpoints. As long as he had this map, he'd be able to investigate the sources of any special products, minerals, and even precious items. This was too important to a merchant.

A month later, when Xiang Yun and Roger were on the verge of just storming out, Suo Jia finally announced that they could head out. After simply organizing their things, they bid farewell to the administration head at the relay station, that old man, and finally took their first official step on their journey.

Chapter 309 – Energy Shield Pt. 2

Although there were very few paths on the Greater Trade Routes, they were only fewer in number, not non-existent. In reality, there were still paths used between each state of residence. However, if one wanted to go someplace else midway, there would be no path to follow.

With Baltic slowly pulling the war chariot, the party of four finally started their journey. Driving was Roger's and Xiang Yu's responsibility. Nicole was a girl after all, so they couldn't make her do any bitter labor. However...despite this, both Roger and Xiang Yun looked at Nicole with looks of envy. Suo Jia could completely figure out what their inner moodiness was from.

“Roar!” An angry roar suddenly came from ahead. A dozen grey figures suddenly leapt out of the trees at the roadside, blocking off the armed chariot's path.

Xiang Yun looked out the glass to inspect the obstructing magical beasts and turned around to announce to everyone in the tent, “Hey! 10 Cyan Wolves are blocking the way, I'll go down and deal with them!”

Xiang Yun pushed the door open and unsheathed a blade on his back. For a moment, one could hear a jumble of random sounds. In just a few seconds, Xiang Yun had completed everything. With the war blade dripping in blood held in his hand, he returned onto the chariot and they continued to advance.

This kind of minor incident didn't really disturb the three inside the tent. Suo Jia was still clasping the map, closely studying it. Roger was lazily leaning against the tent wall and dozing off, and Nicole was currently using a silk handkerchief to wipe her dagger clean.

But soon afterwards, the chariot stopped again. At the same time, Xiang Yun reported to everyone that there were magical beasts

blocking the road again, and he'd have to go and deal with them as well.

In the beginning, nobody really paid it any mind. Walking outside meant that encountering magical beasts blocking the road was extremely normal. However, as time gradually passed, everyone began to feel something was off. In just a moment, they'd already encountered a dozen waves of magical beasts. How were they supposed to advance?!

An exhausted Xiang Yun re-entered the tent and said to Roger with a bitter smile, "Ok, it's your turn to drive for a bit. I have to rest for a while. Otherwise, I might end up getting killed the next time we counter a magical beast wave!"

"Ah!" Roger cried out in astonishment, "Brother, barely any time has passed and you already want to change shifts? Although the magical beasts have come a bit more frequently, it shouldn't use up that much energy with your level of strength!"

Xiang Yun sat down hard on the soft, furry rug and tiredly said, "Stop speaking nonsense and quickly go drive. Won't you personally be able to tell whether the magical beasts are strong or not?"

Roger glanced at Xiang Yun in annoyance and reluctantly stood up to walk outside the tent and start driving the chariot. As he continued to advance, it seemed like Xiang Yun really had been posturing, and just wanted to slack off. It was just a dozen or so magical beast waves, no reason to get so exhausted!

However, after a while, Roger bitterly returned to the tent and said to Suo Jia with a scowl, "Boss, exactly what kind of place is this? Why are the magical beasts so formidable? ***....if we continue on like this, I'm definitely going to lose my life!"

"Oh?" Suo Jia put down the map in his hands and shot a puzzled look at Roger. "What, are the magical beasts blocking the road very powerful? That doesn't seem very likely!"

“Haha...” Roger said in an agonized voice, “Their level of strength can be put aside, but those guys actually have extremely formidable energy shields. It’s impossible to harm them unless you use high energy-consuming attacks to break their energy shields.”

“What!” Suo Jia asked incredulously, “What did you say? Those magical beasts actually have energy shields? You must be joking! Only magical beasts above the middle rank have energy shields. Don’t tell me that all the ones blocking the path are middle-ranked magical beasts! That’s impossible.”

“No! They’re right, the reality is so!” Nicole interjected.

The three men couldn’t help but turn to look over at Nicole in astonishment. Nicole calmly said, “The Greater Trade Routes is a very strange place that produces magical fruits. There’s an extremely normal fruit amongst them called Toughening Fruit. Eating it makes the body turn incomparably tough and durable. Once one eats enough of them, their energy will permeate out through the body and condense into energy shields!”

“Heavens!” Suo Jia exclaimed in surprise. “That means that all the animals here seem to have this kind of shield?”

“Mhm...” Nicole nodded and indifferently answered, “This isn’t some kind of secret or anything. All the magical beasts on the Greater Trade Routes have defensive powers at least tenfold stronger than magical beasts from the outside world. As for other traits, those depend on their habitat, as well as the types of magic fruits that grow there.”

After Nicole finished speaking, Xiang Yun suddenly nodded and turned around to say to Suo Jia, “Boss, now do you understand why we’re so tired? A single strike should clearly be enough to fell a magical beast, but it takes over a dozen of them. Even humans are strong as iron would be unable to endure it!”

Suo Jia couldn’t help but knit his brows together and ponder over this issue. Continuing on like this definitely wouldn’t do. If

they kept stopping after stepping 3 steps forward, when would they ever reach their target?!

The entire carriage suddenly began to rock. Stunned, Roger hurriedly turned around and looked towards the door. All the eye could see was a pack of animals that strongly resembled lions. However, they were magical beasts that were much more imposing. They'd already firmly surrounded the war chariot. Wind blade after wind blade whistled over and crashed into the chariot. The powerful force made the chariot feel like it was a small boat amidst stormy waves; it was as if they could turn over at any moment.

Seeing this, Xiang Yun and Roger didn't dare waste any time. They simultaneously leapt out of the carriage door to fight the magical beasts. At the same time, Suo Jia and Nicole gathered in front of the door, watching carefully in concern.

Worthy of being someone that used his legs, Roger's actions were clearly much faster than Xiang Yun's. He was the first one to come into contact with a lion. He first sent out a chain of kicks, bursting the four wind blades that had come flying at him. Afterwards... Roger's body suddenly flipped over, his feet kicking outwards towards one of the lion beasts with lightning-fast speed.

"Bang, bang, bang..." Dull sounds rang out as Roger's feet continued to heavily stamp onto the lion beast's body over and over again. The enormous impulse was enough to force the lion beasts to retreat in order to avoid the stress on their bodies. However, they were miraculously holding on!

Suo Jia looked carefully and saw that Roger's steps never actually came into contact with the lion beast's body; when Roger's feet had reached about 10 centimeters through the lion beast's skin, the lion beast's body would always flash with a dazzling blue glow. This attack coming towards Roger made it impossible for him to effectively strike his target.

Roger didn't shrink back either. He continued to kick outwards one after another. As he attacked, the glow around the lion beast's body grew thinner, and its distance from the body was decreasing as well. It had originally been 10 centimeters, and by now, had completely disappeared. In this time, Roger had actually needed to continuously kick out a dozen times or so!

Finally, after the lion beast's energy shield was completely used up, Roger's foot suddenly flew up and he stomped hard on the body. Accompanying the clear, crisp sound of bones breaking filled the air, one could also hear the lion beast's miserable cries. Its body flew up at least 30 meters, before crashing into a giant tree. The violent force had caused it to completely lose the protection of its energy shield. The lion beast had all the bones in its body broken, and died horribly.

While Roger had successfully killed off one lion, Xiang Yun's battle was nearing its end as well. He wildly swung the war blade in his hand around. Each time it slashed downwards, a lion beast's body would explode with a flash of blue light. Seven or eight attacks were needed to break that lion's energy shield, before the blade could finally slice the lion beast into halves.

Although judging from outer appearances, Roger seemed to only have kicked multiple times and Xiang Yun seemed to only have attacked around 10 times with his blades, each kick and slash was executed at full force. The energy and stamina consumption was way too great.

In addition, although they'd successfully killed off two of the lion beasts, there were still more than 20 of them waiting in a circle outside the chariot. At the moment...these lion beasts were frantically swarming around Xiang Yun and Roger.

Chapter 310 – Mystical Shield Pt. 1

Fortunately, although the lions were very powerful, Xiang Yun's and Roger's strength weren't ordinary either. After fighting for 5 minutes, over 20 lion beasts had died by Xiang Yun's and Roger's hands.

Breathing hard, Roger seemed to shift over to the chariot and use it as support in his exhaustion. He muttered, "This won't do, Boss. Hurry up and stop the chariot for some rest. If we continue like this, I might actually be killed. If I don't get killed by the magical beasts, I'll die of exhaustion!"

Suo Jia looked at how beaten to death Roger and Xiang Yun were, and only coldly stated, "You can't even take this? If that's really true, then you guys might as well choose to retreat now while it's still early!"

"Eh!" Roger and Xiang Yun were stunned. They blankly stared at Suo Jia, unable to speak.

As if he didn't sense their gazes, Suo Jia said in a heavy voice, "These are the Greater Trade Routes, a place where challenges can appear anywhere. The two of you must get something straight: everything here isn't something that only we encounter; all of these encounters are all things that everyone on the Greater Trade Routes experiences."

"That..." After some hesitation, Nicole still stated, "Young Master Suo Jia, other people choose to go around. As long as one doesn't go straight and follows the path, with a thief present to search for the way, it's possible to quickly pass through with few obstructions."

Suo Jia nodded and looked at Nicole, "You're right. If we didn't go straight down the main road and had sent you out to look for the road instead, we would've indeed been able to avoid these magical beasts. But, do you guys know what our goal here is? It

can't be just to avoid difficulties, right?"

Suo Jia looked over at Xiang Yun, "Xiang Yun, in the past, you always thought you didn't have enough opponents. Now you won't ever have such a regret. Don't tell me you want to choose to shrink back?"

Xiang Yun narrowed his eyes and darkly smiled, "I understand, Captain. Don't worry, I was just complaining early. No matter who my opponent is or how many there are, I, Xiang Yun, have never once shrunk back!"

Hearing Xiang Yun's words, Roger hurriedly interjected, "Right, right, right...I'm the same, hehe...it's fine if there are slightly more magical beasts. If one comes, I'll just suppress it. If a pair comes, I'll get rid of both of them. I definitely won't hold back!"

Suo Jia rolled his eyes in exasperation and said, "Whatever, if we just rely on you two, you guys will die of exhaustion soon. Next... I'll go out and change shifts as well. If all three of us rotate shifts, we should be able to rest well."

Suo Jia moved over to open the door and said, "You three should hurry up and get back into the chariot. I'll drive, Xiang Yun and Roger, quickly go rest so you can change with me later."

After hearing Suo Jia's words, Xiang Yun and Roger didn't waste any more time talking and climbed straight into the chariot to sleep and recover their energy. Everyone knew that this wasn't the time to boast of their abilities. Otherwise, it'd definitely be hard to keep everyone. The magical beasts here weren't as easy to slaughter as sheep were!

With Suo Jia driving, the chariot continued to advance along the main road. What was strange was that he drove for over an hour, yet they actually hadn't encountered a single wave of magical beasts.

In the afternoon, they stopped the chariot and Roger cooked a

plentiful lunch. Once everyone had eaten their fill, they continued moving forwards. Not long after they began to move, finally...the magical beasts appeared again.

Suo Jia couldn't help but furrow his brows at the sight of the magic bears quickly leaping out of the brush on the side of the road. There were roughly over 30 of these giant bears. These creatures were covered with long, red fur, and were over 3 meters tall. In addition, they were extremely solid and sturdy. A single glance was enough to tell that these creatures wouldn't be easy to defeat.

Suo Jia stopped the chariot and pushed the door open to leave. He knew that these bears definitely couldn't be allowed near the chariot. Otherwise, a single swipe would be enough to cause the chariot to topple to the ground, or even fall apart.

However, Suo Jia alone couldn't keep so many giant bears away. Although he could call Xiang Yun and Roger out, that was a bit too shameful.

Suo Jia waved his left hand to open his interspatial ring, and the little pet's milky-white body instantly leapt out. Its two short front claws were tightly hugging Suo Jia's neck, and it looked at Suo Jia with joyous eyes.

Suo Jia struggled to disentangle the little pet and urged, "Stop fooling around and immediately start fighting. If you continue playing, you'll be flattened like a pancake!"

Hearing this, the little creature's body suddenly stiffened, and it woodenly turned its head to look behind. The next moment...a large, broad body of a red giant bear appeared before its line of sight.

Faced against such a sturdy Crimson Bear, the little creature immediately jumped out of Suo Jia's arms. With a flap of its wings, its body remained suspended in mid-air. At the same time, layer after layer of Glacial Armor began to appear on its body.

“Rumble!” Finally...after covering itself with dozens of layers of Glacial Armor, its height reached 6 meters, and was an even more solid figure than that Crimson Bear. Like a meteor, the little pet descended down from the sky to obstruct all the Crimson Bears before it.

Despite going against a cockroach-like creature that was larger and sturdier than it, the Crimson Bears didn't seem to be scared at all. They all stood up and brandished their giant claws, moving to surround the Diamond Dragon.

“Pei!” Seeing the quickly approaching bear, the Diamond Dragon opened its great mouth and suddenly spat out balls of blue, ice-cold mist, instantly freezing bear after bear to the ground.

“Snap...crack...” Against the ice layers surrounding their bodies, the Crimson Bears only struggled for a bit because the bindings around them fell into shattered pieces of ice onto the floor. At the same time, the Crimson Bears that had been previously sealed by ice began to charge forwards, blazing towards the Diamond Dragon.

Suo Jia, and even the Diamond Dragon, dropped their jaws open in astonishment. Weren't these Crimson Bears a bit too powerful? They made the Ice Seal seem like it was nothing. If Suo Jia didn't know just how powerful the Diamond Dragon's Ice Seal was, he would've suspected the Ice Seal was made of paper.

Stunned for a moment, the Crimson Bears immediately encircled the Diamond Dragon, waving their giant paws around as they swatted at the dragon.

Suo Jia couldn't help but proudly smile at this scene. Although these bears were powerful, wanting to confront the Diamond Dragon was too naive of a thought. This meter thick Glacial Armor wasn't something that they could break through!

The battle between the Crimson Bears and the Diamond Dragon finally began. Suo Jia watched blankly as the Glacial Armor broke

off into flying shards with a loud “snap” upon contact with each swat. This was completely different from what Suo Jia had imagined!

These bears were just too strong and powerful. A single slap was enough to immediately send a large chunk of the Glacial Armor flying. If a dozen or so wildly swatted at the same time, the Diamond Dragon’s body would immediately crumble under the bears’ claws.

“Chirp...” With a miserable cry, the little pet’s milky white body suddenly dropped out from the Glacial Armor in midair. It struggled to flap its wings and fly into Suo Jia’s arms.

Suo Jia lifted the little pet and carefully looked over it a few times. After confirming that it hadn’t really gotten hurt, Suo Jia finally gave a sigh of relief. Luckily...these Crimson Bears couldn’t fly, and thus were unable to do anything to the little pet. Otherwise, it would’ve been dangerous just now.

Suo Jia examined the trembling little pet in his hands, and sighed. He knew that the reason the Diamond Dragon had been utterly defeated so quickly was firstly because the power of the Crimson Bears was too great. Secondly, the Diamond Dragon had only just entered the long term period and so its strength was still too little. Most importantly, its strength was still lacking; its Glacial Armor’s temperature wasn’t low enough, and thus it wasn’t hard enough either.

Suo Jia sent the little creature back into the interspatial ring and took a deep breath. He knew that next...he would have to rely on himself to resolve these troubles.

Chapter 311 – Mystical Shield Pt. 2

Suo Jia faced the slowly nearing Crimson Bears and slightly pushed off the ground with his feet, his body suddenly leaping into the air. He stretched his right hand and instantly sent out an Ice Roar devastating the pack of bears. Hundreds of ice blades whizzed through the pack, cutting everything as they flew around.

The Crimson Bears didn't really care about the cuts inflicted by the hundreds of ice blades. They began to gather around Suo Jia, attempting to launch an attack on him. Unfortunately, Suo Jia was floating mid-air, so it was impossible to touch him.

While mid-air, Suo Jia kept changing its position, trying to gather the 30 Crimson Bears into one giant group. Only by doing this could Suo Jia could use Ice Roar to affect all the Crimson Bears at once.

A magician was quite frightening. Their strength lay within their formidable magical power, especially during an AoE attack, like Ice Roar. With Suo Jia's current strength, he could casually cast Ice Roar within a perimeter of 10 meters in diameter, forming a Frostsaber Purgatory. A single Ice Roar was sufficient to release hundreds of ice blades, enough to go up against a hundreds of attacks from a same level thief!

The pale-blue-colored ice blades spun around, incessantly cutting into the Crimson Bears. Each time the ice blade made contact with a bear's body, there would be a burst of glittering blue light as large groups of ice blades wildly whirled around. The energy shields around the Crimson Bears grew thinner and thinner.

Finally, after Suo Jia had activated the ninth Ice Roar, all of the bears' energy shields simultaneously vanished. Having lost their energy shields, while these magic beasts were extremely tough, they couldn't possibly put up a resistance against Suo Jia's magic attacks.

Suo Jia watched as all the ice blades penetrated the Crimson Bears' bodies. Stream after stream of scarlet blood flew out of these bodies, and the bears instantly turned into a true depiction of their name of 'blood-colored bears'!

Suo Jia lightly stamped his right foot, and his body twisted in strange ways back to the top of the war chariot. Seeing the pile of bear corpses strewn across a 20 meter radius, Suo Jia couldn't help but smile confidently. In terms of ability to kill groups of magical beasts, neither Xiang Yun or Roger could ever compare to Suo Jia!

"Papapa...." A crisp sound of applause rang from behind Suo Jia. He turned around in surprise, only to see Nicole, Roger, and Xiang Yun having gathered around the chariot door at some point, and currently looking at him in admiration.

Actually, there was no way they couldn't have gone to see the Crimson Bears at least once after encountering so many. However, this single glance had allowed them to enjoy a good show for free. Suo Jia's terrifying AoE attacks had completely shocked all three of them!

Xiang Yun looked at Suo Jin incredulously and shook his head as he sighed, "Is that magic? It's really too mystical. To think that you could simultaneously attack 30 large bears...isn't that too frightening, too unrivalled?"

"Tch..." Nicole curled her lip in disdain and said, "Of course. In reality, any occupation can be unrivalled, it just depends on how strong you are. For example, we treasure hunters cannot massacre enemies in batches like mages, but we have our own personal strength. If we really went against anyone, we wouldn't fear them!"

"Mmm..." Roger nodded in agreement. "Nicole is right. Every occupation can be the most powerful. The crucial point is the person's inner qualities. Captain is indeed formidable, but we're also very powerful."

Suo Jia smiled, and paid little mind to the three fellows' debate behind him. Their words were clearly superfluous. Every occupation had a favorable scope for its abilities. Everyone had to come together and make up for each other's weak points in order to create the strongest group.

Suo Jia thoughtfully looked at the piles of corpses in front of him and silently re-entered the chariot. The other three exchanged glances and then followed behind Suo Jia, entering the chariot behind him.

Suo Jia stretched out a hand and gestured at everyone to sit down. He then excitedly said, "Hey! I suddenly thought of an idea. Since those magical beasts were able to use magic shields after eating the Toughening Fruits, then what happens if humans eat it?"

Nicole firmly said, "I can answer that. In reality, the Toughening Fruits are one of the normal magical fruits. However, their effects depend on one's physical strength. Mages and thieves are recommended not to eat them because their physical strength is so low that they can't display the effects at all, making it too much of a waste."

"Hmm?" Suo Jia looked at Nicole and asked in interest, "Don't talk so in such a vague and generalized manner. What do you personally think?"

Nicole nodded and continued, "The effects of the Toughening Fruits are restricted by the physical body's strength; the strength of the energy shield is directly proportional to one's physical strength. If a mage ate the fruit, they wouldn't have a very strong shield. However, if a warrior ate it, it would be an entirely different story. The energy shield would strengthen with their physical power, and make them even tougher!"

"Mmm..." Suo Jia nodded in disappointment, then turned around to say to Xiang Yun and Roger. "In that case, Nicole and I

won't be eating those things. However, you guys don't need to hold back from eating some more."

The eyes of Roger and Xiang Yun couldn't help but brighten in excitement at these words. As they dreamed about using their own energy shields, Nicole said, "This idea is indeed not bad, but... although these Toughening Fruits are pretty normal, you can only eat one a week. In addition...more than a day cannot be allowed to pass between the point of harvest and consumption. Otherwise, the effects will be instantly lost."

"That..." Suo Jia, Roger, and Xiang Yun couldn't help but wear bitter expressions of disappointment on their faces.

Nicole laughed at their faces and said, "That's why, although Toughening Fruits aren't rare, eating a couple requires luck. In addition...because of its time restrictions, the value of these fruits aren't very low either. Rank 1 fruits require 1000 Trade Route coins! Rank 2 require 5000, Rank 3 require 10,000, and those above Rank 3 don't have any set amounts, just depends on pure luck."

Suo Jia nodded in understanding and fiercely waved a hand as he loudly declared, "Alright. Although we don't understand these fruits too well, the residents definitely do. We should hurry up and advance to the next city as quickly as possible. I believe that there will definitely be somewhere where we will be able to find out the effects of these Toughening Fruits."

With a little motivation, everyone's spirits had instantly soared. After rushing through three roads, they finally reached outside a relay station, Greater Trade Routes' first village—Enchanting Village.

Enchanting Village wasn't very large, with only about 400 residents. It was a typical hunting village. The village residents made a living off hunting; the surrounding forests had countless magical beasts as their hunting targets.

Suo Jia's party smoothly entered the village. However, what they

found strange was that upon their arrival, not only did nobody come speak to them, but rather, everyone hid. One by one, doors and windows were closed; they even ignored knocks on the doors.

Nicole couldn't help but sigh and dejectedly speak, "These are all indigenous people from the Greater Trade Routes villages. They definitely don't have good impressions of adventurers. Wanting to conduct a business transaction with them will be extremely difficult. I wanted to hurry up and earn their trust, but this is clearly an incompletable task, which was precisely why the merchant groups didn't want us to come here."

"Damn..." Suo Jia couldn't help but feel dizzy at Nicole's words. Those entering under the status of a merchant had to earn the trust of the indigenous people. They had to complete at least 10 transactions at every checkpoint, and receive over 10 village trustee documents in order to pass.

Suo Jia furrowed his brows and pondered it for a bit. Back then, the reason they'd chosen to enter as a merchant group was firstly because the merchant groups encompassed all the other identities' merits without the faults. Secondly, it was because Suo Jia was very confident in his commerce abilities. Moreover, he enjoyed this line of work.

After thinking it over for a bit, Suo Jia suddenly clapped his hands and took out the large pouch containing Trade Route coins from his interspatial ring. He flipped the pouch upside down, causing the 100,000+ Trade Route coins to fall on the limestone path at his feet. He then loudly yelled, "To all the fellow villages, please don't be afraid, We are merchants, and have come to acquire some special local products. Please, relax, we have no ill intentions!"

After seeing Suo Jia loudly shouting, and then looking back at the pile of money at Suo Jia's feet, Nicole and the others immediately understood. Suo Jia's actions were based on profits. He was using money to draw the residents out. As long as someone

was willing to take the lead and come out first, the following matters would logically complete themselves as well.

Chapter 312 – Parting Ways Pt. 1

Originally, Suo Jia had thought that after dumping so much money on the ground, there would definitely be someone audacious enough to come out and look. However, he hadn't imagined that even after waiting for quite a while, not a single village left their homes. It seemed as if they didn't even see the money-covered ground.

Suo Jia helplessly sighed. He knew that these villages must have encountered something; otherwise, they definitely wouldn't be so cautious. What Suo Jia was depressed about was that he would have to bear the consequences of a disaster created by someone else. It was really too upsetting.

With the lack of a better option, Suo Jia pulled out some tents and set them up on the public square at the center of the village. At the same time, Roger also pulled out some ingredients and tools, and started to cook.

That night, Suo Jia and his three companions gathered together, drinking the fresh juice that Roger had blended. They sat around in a circle, drinking while looking at a map, as well as listening to Suo Jia's explanation.

Suo Jia looked at the others and said, "Starting from tomorrow, there's no need to gather together anymore. I'm the only one necessary to carry out transactions. Even if you guys followed, you wouldn't be of any use. We might as well all split up and act separately. That way, our efficiency will increase."

"Yea..." Xiang Yun nodded in agreement and said, "That's right. It should've been like this from the beginning. If you made us follow you all around while doing business, it would be way too troublesome. Moreover, since we cannot avoid magical beasts, our movements would get problematic. Our progress would probably be so choppy that we wouldn't get anything done."

Suo Jia nodded while smiling and continued, “At the moment, Nicole and I have already drawn maps according to everyone’s objectives. I have marked the important locations on it, so if you just follow the map, there definitely won’t be any problems!”

Suo Jia turned to Xiang Yun and warned, “Xiang Yun, your map has all the places that any group must pass through in order to get to the first checkpoint. You just need to travel back and forth between these places to discover the movements of most adventurer groups at the first checkpoint. You’ll definitely have enough people to fight!”

“Hehe...” Xiang Yun put away his map with a bright smile, and praised Suo Jia, “In the end, Boss knows me best. You know that I can’t stand being stifled. Thanks a ton!”

Suo Jia nodded, and turned to look at Nicole. “Nicole, I marked the more mysterious regions around the first checkpoint for you to search around. Head out tomorrow morning and properly look through those areas!”

Nicole excitedly nodded without saying another word. From her appearance, one could tell that she was clearly already longing for the adventuring life starting from tomorrow.

Next, Suo Jia shifted his gaze to Roger and said in a low voice, “As you you, I’ve already marked the villages that are easier to harass. You can hurry up over there and receive some missions under the identity of a mercenary, and suppress some of those guys that cause commotion.”

“Mhmm...” Roger nodded furiously and joyously replied, “Many thanks, Boss. Don’t worry, we’ll definitely try our best.”

After giving instructions to all three of them, Suo Jia furrowed his brows and said, “Before you head out, I have some words I want to say. Everyone will be moving independently, so if you make a move, it’ll be one vs a group. So there are several principles I want you guys to abide to under all circumstances!”

“Boss...if you have anything you want to say, go ahead. We’re listening!” Roger happily agreed.

Suo Jia nodded and urged, “Firstly, everyone must be extremely cautious. Don’t go too overboard; all three of you are like that. If the opponent isn’t one you can challenge at the moment, don’t challenge them. Even if it’s training, you must act within your own capabilities. I hope that the next time we gather together, we won’t be missing a companion!”

Xiang Yun smiled and replied, “Don’t worry, Boss. This is something that all of us know. After all...we aren’t children anymore. We’ve all wandered around this kind of environment for a long time now. We know what to do and what not to do!”

“Mmm...” Suo Jia relaxed, and nodded in response. He then continued, “Secondly, you must all rise your strength as quickly as possible. Use any method necessary, and try to obtain the magic fruits you want and strengthen yourselves. I hope...that after 3 months, when we’ve all gathered together once more, everyone’s strength will have doubled!”

“Aha!” Roger laughed and stated, “Boss, we know that. Wasn’t the reason we came here to improve ourselves? We wouldn’t possibly let such a good opportunity go to waste.”

Nicole interjected, “What do you know? Do you know what kind of fruits you should be eating? Really, if you don’t understand anything, don’t go around randomly promising things.”

“That...” Roger couldn’t help but stutter at this. He really wanted to refute, but he actually didn’t know what kind of magic fruit to eat.

Suo Jia added, “Mm...Roger and Xiang Yun, you two should mainly eat Toughening Fruits. Although these fruits are very average, they are extremely important to you guys. Defense is always a warrior’s lifeline!”

“Yea...” Nicole agreed and supplemented, “Before you decide what type of fruits you’re going to target, it would be good to eat Toughening Fruits for the time being. You guys must remember not to eat too many different types; the magic fruits can clash with each other, as there are many that are incompatible. If you eat them together, you’ll instantly die!”

Suo Jia, Roger, and Xiang Yun couldn’t help but sharply inhale at Nicole’s words. At the same time, Nicole continued on, “Generally, aside from the most average Toughening Fruits, all the other magic fruits cannot be eaten at the same time. That’s why, I hope that everyone understands that, unless you’ve already decided on which direction you want to develop towards, Toughening Fruits are the best choice!”

“Mmm..” Suo Jia agreed and added, “That’s right, Nicole is correct. Putting aside the conflicts between the fruits, we should focus on the point of eating only one fruit per week. We can’t eat too many miscellaneous things, otherwise we’ll be called jacks of all trade but masters of none.”

After a while, Suo Jia firmly declared, “I think that everyone should just eat Toughening Fruits for the time being. While improving your defensive abilities, you can understand more about the various types of magic fruits and their characteristics. Once you reach a certain point in understand, you can decide exactly what kind of fruit you want have!”

“I understand...” Xiang Yun nodded firmly and stated, “You mean to say that aside from the Toughening Fruits, we can only eat one other type of fruit. That’s why we must choose it very seriously!”

“Yes, yes, yes...” Roger furiously nodded and agreed, “It’s just not biting off more than you can chew. Once we really decide what kind of fruits are most important for us, we’ll make another decision. Before this, everyone should still eat Toughening Fruits.”

Seeing everyone finally agree on something, Suo Jia happily nodded and said, “However, there are exceptions. Although the four of us haven’t yet decided what kind of fruit to eat, I’ve already decided that my Diamond Dragon needs to eat Freezing Fruits!”

“Oh?” The three companions couldn’t help but look at Suo Jia in confusion.

Under their gazes, Suo Jia firmly stated, “The most important thing to a Diamond Dragon is temperature. The lower the temperature, the higher its defense and the more powerful its attack. Thus...there’s no need to think over what kind of fruit it should eat.”

“That...” Nicole asked in uncertainty, “I admit that what you say is reasonable, but I think that Young Master Suo Jia should also be eating these Freezing Fruits, right?”

“Haha...” Suo Jia bitterly smiled and shook his head as he helplessly replied, “That’s right, originally I wanted to eat them too. But you should know that magic fruits aren’t easy to find. If we both eat the same type of fruit, there definitely won’t be enough to go around. That’s why I can only switch to another type.”

Nicole couldn’t help but grow curious as she asked, “Yea, you’re right. Obtaining a fruit is already difficult. If the both of you eat the same ones, it’ll be hard to decide who eats it. However, as an ice mage, if you don’t plan on eating Freezing Fruits, what do you plan on eating?”

Chapter 313 – Parting Ways Pt. 2

Suo Jia wryly smiled at Nicole and shook his head. “I don’t know that either. At the moment, I don’t know much about the different types of magic fruits and their abilities, so...it’ll take some more time before I can decide.”

The other three couldn’t help but ponder this. It wasn’t just Suo Jia who couldn’t decide, none of them could. They stood up one by one to return to their own beds and close their eyes to think about it more.

The second morning, after arranging a place and time to gather, Nicole, Roger, and Xiang Yun packed up their things and left Enchanting Village. Only Suo Jia continued to stay there, waiting for the villages to appear.

After waiting for two days, finally...while unwilling, the villagers were forced to come out of their homes. Otherwise, they wouldn’t be able to continue living their normal lives. Even if they were unwilling, they couldn’t worry about such things too much.

Seeing the village gradually turn livelier, Suo Jia pondered something for a bit before smiling at some thought. He turned around to return the tent, and took out a blanket. He also took out from the interspatial ring large amounts of rare items originating from outside the Trade Routes, and placed them on the blanket.

After calmly sitting on the blanket, Suo Jia narrowed his eyes and waved his right hand. He began to train in the Ice and Snow Pact, seemingly completely ignoring the villagers moving around, and without any intention of peddling.

After tentatively walking about for a while, the villagers’ courage gradually increased. The number of villagers also increased, and soon after, everyone had put their worries aside and begun to freely move around.

Suo Jia couldn't help but secretly celebrate. He returned to the inside of the tent to create a golden flag. On it were large, colorful words that read: Suo Jia's Miscellaneous Goods!

Suo Jia used a rod to support the large flag, then returned to the area in front of the carpet outside the tent, and stuck it into the ground. Then...Suo Jia began to patiently place the items onto the blanket for display.

He first took the Life Potions out, and used beast tendons to tie every three up into a bundle. Before the Life Potions, Suo Jia placed a manual. He believed that these items were definitely things that the hunters here yearned for in their dreams.

Of course, the Life Potions alone weren't enough. Suo Jia also took out Endurance Potions, Magic Potions, and Spirit Potions. Obviously...Suo Jia didn't take out the refined ones. To these villagers, normal potions were already enough.

If it were just these four colored potions, the booth would've just been called a medicine stand. But this was clearly not what Suo Jia wanted. Fortunately, although he'd just entered the Greater Trade Routes, Suo Jia had some strange items.

He first took out a cozy recliner. This was something from outside the Greater Trade Routes, a undoubtedly a luxury product. It wasn't used for anything but enjoyment. Suo Jia believed such a good item would definitely attract everyone's attention.

Travel tables, chairs, tents, everyday products, various utensils, wine glasses, plates and bowls. Suo Jia practically took everything out, and began his peddling.

There was no concern about Suo Jia running out of things to use. In reality, the villagers also used these things. All it was that the shapes and features were different because of cultural variance. Even if Suo Jia sold his, he'd be completely able to buy another set right here.

These things were used to attract the bigshots. However, Suo Jia knew that these bigshots were very experienced, and acted very cautiously; there would most likely be some difficulty. If he wanted to attract the interest of adults, he'd need to use children to get through to them.

Suo Jia pulled out a refining furnace and then took out some old parts from his interspatial ring to begin making something. With Suo Jia's skilled hands, a toy quickly made its appearance in front of him.

Suo Jia was an alchemist that could make even magic automatons. Although Suo Jia's strength in this respect was still very limited, Suo Jia was undoubtedly the peak grade alchemist in this current age where the alchemy arts had been lost.

He used the methods of making magic automatons to create toys that were light and easy to lift. After only a morning, Suo Jia had managed to make dozens of toys. These toys could not only make strange sounds, but a single press was enough make them walk away and do random, cute movements. It was beyond mystical.

Of course, these were actually extremely simple things. They were just toys. However...Suo Jia had used magic automaton materials to make these, which made them even more miraculous.

Suo Jia excitedly watched several people walk by, while also dancing with joy, and producing some strange sounding toys. Originally...Suo Jia had only wanted to make some toys to attract some children. However, he hadn't imagined that after making things for the entire morning, and constantly using magic automaton creation skills and tricks, Suo Jia's comprehension of the magical automatons had suddenly soared.

The first toy Suo Jia created could only walk. As he made more, they became able to automatically walk on the ground. After creating the first toy and integrating the magic automaton arts, Suo Jia's mind had suddenly been flooded with idea and

inspirations.

Thus, the second toy could not only just walk, but coordinate its walking with making various sounds. The third toy could already walk as it danced, all while making strange noises.

It could be said that each time Suo Jia made a toy, his understanding of the magic automaton arts would deepen somewhat as well. One Suo Jia completed his tenth toy, he couldn't dare believe he'd been the one to make them.

A whole morning passed. Suo Jia blankly stared at the thirteenth, and final, product. This had a humanoid shape, and held a fake sword in its hand as well. Once it was activated, this toy would cry out while waving the toy sword in its hand, then activate the warrior style attack routine: chop, raise, pierce, spinning horizontal slash, barbaric collision. At the very end, it would put away its sword while standing tall, giving off the air of a highly respectable person.

This set of moves couldn't be underestimated. These reflected the level Suo Jia's magic automaton creation was at. The toy seemed very balanced, and its movements were extremely fluid. With its body structure, its presence and charm had reached a level so high that even Suo Jia couldn't believe.

“Wa! This little guy is too amazing. I really want one!” As Suo Jia was sighing about his last toy, Suo Jia heard some words ring out from in front of him.

Suo Jia lifted his head in confusion and looked around. At some point, children had surrounded his blanket, forming an impenetrable circle..

Suo Jia gently placed the toy down onto the blanket and kindly asked the children, “Do you want a toy?”

“I want!” The children had all simultaneously answered around the same time.

Suo Jia nodded with a smile and continued, “Alright, the young friends that want a toy should immediately go home and tell their parents that I’m selling toys here. These can be purchased with money, or you can exchange them with other items!”

The children that heard Suo Jia’s words probably hadn’t seen a merchant before, and just blankly stood there. Seeing this, Suo Jia continued to say, “Everyone must act quickly. There are only thirteen toys here. If other children exchange it away for something, there will be nothing left!”

As soon as Suo Jia said this, all the children immediately turned around as fast as possible and wildly bounded off in different directions. Suo Jia couldn’t help but break out into cold sweat at the sight of that speed. Those kids were so young, yet could run so fast. It looked like...nothing on the Greater Trade Routes could be judged by looking at a normal person’s point of view.

After waiting for a short while, those kids all returned. Each one of them was dragging an adult by the hand. At that moment, the villagers seemed to have relaxed a bit, as they were pulled by the children towards Suo Jia.

The dozen villagers that had been dragged over by the children didn’t seem interested in the things on Suo Jia’s display. Rather, they were very interested in the last toy that Suo Jia had created. They stared unblinkingly at that little human with an expression that looked like they really wanted to buy it.

Chapter 314 – Thriving And Prosperous Business Pt. 1

Finally, an old man said, “Um...this friend over here, how are you selling this little item?”

Seeing the arrival of a business opportunity, Suo Jia immediately became spirited. He excitedly stood up and said with the toy in his hand, “Elder, you really have good taste. To think that you’d manage to choose the best item among all my stuff here.”

Suo Jia paused for a bit before pretending to ponder deeply. He then firmly said, “Originally, this item was worth a lot of money. However, this is my first time on your grounds, and the first transaction. Thus, I won’t charge you. Just give me whatever amount you’d like!”

The elder stared long and hard at the toy in Suo Jia’s hand, and furrowed his brows as he pondered this for a while. He then firmly stated, “Friend, how many of these do you have total? If I wanted 100 of them, would you be able to supply them?”

“A hundred!” Suo Jia stared at the elder in shock, not daring to believe his own ears. He didn’t understand, it was just a toy. Why did this old man want to buy so many?!

The elder saw Suo Jia’s astonished expression and he said in a low voice, “These things are really too ingenuous. I think...that if each child was given one, they’d be able to receive guidance for systematic military skills since a young age. Once these actions are carved into their minds, then....they’ll naturally be able to change these into part of their abilities after they grow older!”

“Wow!” Suo Jia couldn’t help but exclaim in admiration. This old man was really too smart. If children were forced into learning and training, their vexed state of mind would make it impossible for them to properly learn anything. However, if it was a toy, that was

a different story. They could play around with it in their hands all day, and it would secretly influence them, allowing them learn it all.

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Suo Jia withdrew the toy in his hand, and sincerely said to the elder, “Mister Elder, honestly speaking, this is just a toy. It still falls a bit short of being able to be used as a tool to instruct children.”

“No!” The elder impatiently shook his head and replied, “Although it’s very simple, it’s already quite good. This is most elaborate toy I’ve seen in my long life. It’s enough...”

Without waiting for the elder to finish speaking, Suo Jia suddenly raised a hand to interrupt him. At the same time, Suo Jia continued, “Anyways, give me a week’s time. If you want a toy to instruct the children in their training, then I’ll be able to provide something even better!”

“That’s...” The elder hesitantly looked at Suo Jia before reluctantly nodding. “Alright, since you’re so insistent, I can only agree to you. However, I want to know something. Exactly how are you selling these? If it’s too expensive, we won’t be able to afford it!”

Suo Jia smiled and resolutely said, “Mister Elder, don’t worry. Although I’m a merchant, I’m not black-hearted. In terms of pricing, you can give whatever you find appropriate!”

“That’s...” After stuttering for a bit, the elder bitterly said, “You must also know that this is a hunting village. Nobody here is well off. That’s why...we can only give you 100 Trade Route coins for each toy! What do you think...”

After hearing the elder’s words, Suo Jia was so excited that he almost shouted out. A hundred Trade Route coins couldn’t be looked down on; 100 of these toys would give him 10,000 coins!

That was enough to buy a rank 3 magic fruit.

However, since he was a merchant, Suo Jia obviously couldn't just agree. Although these toys' manufacturing costs were pretty much negligible, a merchant always tried to obtain a large amount of profit.

Suo Jia furrowed his brows and said, "Um...Mister Elder, isn't that price too low? Even if I gave them out for free, that amount doesn't even cover manufacturing costs. See...the difference is really too great!"

"Ah..." The elder awkwardly looked at Suo Jia and hesitantly replied, "I also know it's too low. However, we really can't bring out anything worth more money. How about...we only ask for 10 then?"

"Hm..." Feigning a thoughtful appearance, Suo Jia then abruptly slapped his leg and cried out, "How about this, Mister Elder. In terms of price, it can't become any cheaper. However, you have to bring items over in exchange!"

"Use items to exchange for it?" The elder asked doubtfully.

Suo Jia nodded and smiled, "That's right. From my knowledge, a magical beast called the Golden Raccoon Dog roams about the village. I'm sure that...you guys must have a lot of its fur, right?"

The elder looked at Suo Jia in confusion and said, "That's right, our village does have a lot of Golden Raccoon Dog fur. It's both soft and glossy, and we normally use it to make clothes. You want to have this as exchange?"

Suo Jia excitedly nodded and firmly confirmed, "That's right. I just need ten Golden Raccoon Dog furs for one toy. What do you think?"

"Not a problem, let's just go with that!" After hearing Suo Jia's words, the elder looked as if he'd seen a ghost. He hurriedly agreed to the terms. Seeing this, Suo Jia realized that he'd definitely sold

it off for cheap.

The Golden Raccoon Dog was a wind type magical beast. It wasn't that formidable, but it was extremely fast. Its fur was very beautiful, and seemed to have a halo of light enshrouding it. According to the reports from adventurers, the inland village could sell one Golden Raccoon Dog's fur for a high price of 100 Trade Route coins! In other words, Suo Jia had basically sold each of those toys for 1000!

He could use the furs to make clothes. Aside from being beautiful, these furs could more importantly allow people to move without a sound. Their bodies would become lithe, and the furs also emitted an unusually sweet fragrance. Females enjoyed these clothes the most!

Although he knew that he'd sold it off for cheap, Suo Jia didn't regret it. Even though he knew that he'd get what he wanted if he requested more, Suo Jia didn't want more. Merchants pursued profits, but they could not be corrupt!

Although the villagers all considered these furs to be junk, it was because they didn't communicate enough, and their information network wasn't sufficiently developed. Earning 10 times the profits was already enough for Suo Jia.

Suo Jia smiled and picked up a bundle of four colored potions on the blanket. He said to the elder, "Mister Elder, please look at this. These are the four colored potions that I exclusively sell. They can recover wounds, replenish battle qi and magic power, restore spirit power, and physical strength. I think...that as a hunter, you guys must really need these things, right?"

"What!" The elder stared at the potions in Suo Jia's hand in utter shock. "How is that possible? How can such potions even exist? You...you aren't trying to cheat me, right?"

Suo Jia maintained his smile and tossed the bundle of potions at the elder. "Whether I'm cheating you or not doesn't just depend on

what I say. You can bring that bundle of potions back with you and test them. If the effects don't agree with what I said, I'll just give you the 100 toys for free!"

The elder gripped the potions and quickly turned around to leave. Suo Jia watched the elder's retreating back. He knew that the elder had definitely gone to test these potions.

Suo Jia retracted his gaze in satisfaction. He cleaned up the things displayed on the blanket while also fantasizing...exactly how many Golden Raccoon Dog furs did this village have?

After cleaning up the blanket, Suo Jia returned to the inside of the tent and sat down on the cushion. He then closed his eyes and began to ponder. Since he'd already made a promise with the other party, Suo Jia would have to design a toy that would sufficiently satisfy the other party.

Although Suo Jia was a mage, not in name only, but also in reality, Suo Jia had been aiming to be a warrior from beginning to end. Thus...Suo Jia had researched warrior battle skills even more thoroughly than he'd studied magic. After all....warrior battle skills were limited, simple, but still effective. They weren't as complicated as magic.

In general, the warrior's battle skills could be defined as strike, poke, chop, pierce, slash, sweep, block, dash, and collide. These were the nine basic skills; no matter how powerful a skill was, it had to be developed from this foundation.

Since the other party wanted to teach children warrior skills, Suo Jia couldn't make a mistake. He had to bring together all the basic warrior battle skills together. This was the only way he'd be able to instruct children with the right qualifications!

Suo Jia took out a pencil and paper, meticulously making calculations. After studying it for three days, Suo Jia could finally confirm the final attack plan!

During the next three days, Suo Jia created hundreds of toys with the help of the blueprints. These toys could all smoothly and activate the nine basic battle skills. That wasn't all; in order to make the children interested, Suo Jia also brazenly tried a new invention.

Chapter 315 – Thriving And Prosperous Business Pt. 2

Finally, after he'd finished making the 100 toys, Suo Jia gave a large stretch and slowly stood up. An entire week had passed before Suo Jia had finally completed the toys' designs and production.

Suo Jia looked in satisfaction at the hundred toys each with a tall and straight body that stood a third of a meter tall, with a large sword in its hand. These toys were his greatest masterpieces that he'd created after researching so many years of alchemy!

Once all the toys were stored away into the interspatial ring, Suo Jia opened the tent door to get a breath of fresh air. However, the moment he opened it, he heard a cry of alarm!

Bewildered, Suo Jia looked over towards the direction of the sound, and saw a large, robust male currently looking at him in surprise. Suo Jia watched as the thick and sturdy man suddenly turned around and loudly shouted, "Village Chief! That guy woke up!"

Suo Jia stared at the guy that had seemingly opened his throat and was currently yelling extremely loudly. He had absolutely no idea what was going on. As he was questioning it, the silent village suddenly burst into life. Countless figures began to race over from their homes in all different directions, quickly gathering at Suo Jia's location.

Soon, the elder from the day before once again appeared before Suo Jia. Wild with joy, he looked at Suo Jia and shakingly said, "Friend, I've already tested the potions you gave me that day, the effects are really too miraculous! They're so mystical that it's hard to believe true!"

Suo Jia let out a breath and said, "As a merchant, it is aesthetic to

always be honest. I wouldn't ever lie to others."

"Mm, mm...." The elder impatiently nodded and said, "I wonder, can we use the Golden Raccoon Dog furs you'd mentioned before to exchange for some of these potions?"

Suo Jia nodded in delight and smiled, "That's not a problem. 10 Golden Raccoon Dog furs can be exchanged for one bundle of potions. What do you all think?"

The elder looked at Suo Jia with a gaze of admiration and gratefully said, "I really can't thank you enough. However, I don't understand, you definitely know how impactful these potions are to us. But why are you selling them off for so little?"

Suo Jia smiled and earnestly replied, "I've said this before: although I'm a merchant, I'm not evil. Although these potions are like lives to you, I care more about being truthful as a merchant. After all...what I want to do isn't just a business transaction; if possible, I want to continue doing business with you all!"

The elder looked at Suo Jia with praise and excitedly replied, "I really thank you. Since you're so generous, then I will represent the village and order 400 bundles of four colored potions!"

Suo Jia's lit up in delight, and he pulled out a toy from his ring. "With the addition of these 100 teaching machines, you guys only need to give me 5000 Golden Raccoon Dog furs!"

"Not a problem!" The elder happily nodded and said, "Although the Golden Raccoon Dogs are a bit hard to get, they've been stocked for hundreds of years. If each family takes out 10 furs, it's not a problem at all!"

"Hehe..." Greedily licking his lips, Suo Jia said in a low voice, "Mister Elder, I'm sure you know that I, a merchant, came to Enchanting Village in order to purchase those Golden Raccoon Dog furs. If everyone is willing, I will purchase every fur for 10 coins!"

"Ah!" The elder looked at Suo Jia in astonishment and nodded.

“That’s not a problem, I’ll help you spread the word. However...I can’t guarantee that everyone will sell them to you!”

Suo Jia joyously nodded, and passed the toy in his hands to the elder. “That’s right, you should verify this. This is the new teaching machine I created for the villager children!”

The elder doubtfully took the toy and surveyed it a few times. He then looked back at Suo Jia in confusion and said, “This...it’s best if you give me a demonstration. I can’t move it!”

Suo Jia smiled and nodded as he took the toy back and pointed to the button. “Everyone, look, there is a button here. Once you press it, this toy will begin moving!”

Suo Jia pressed down that button and immediately afterwards... the little person a third of a meter tall quickly began to move. A warrior’s basic battle skills were fluidly demonstrated one after another in front of everyone.

“Wow!” The villagers couldn’t help but cry out in surprise. Although everyone knew these battle skills, this was the first time they had seen a toy perform them to this level, and so accurately as well.

Suo Jia mysteriously smiled at the sight of everyone’s gazes of admiration. He reached out to pick the toy up, then opened the cover on the toy’s back to show 9 buttons. Then...Suo Jia explained, “Everyone, look here. These are the routine circuits. These 9 buttons each represent one action. Based on the different orders that you can press the buttons in, you can arrange the battle skills in various sequences!”

Suo Jia handed the toy to the elder and urged, “Mister Elder, you should set it up. Set the toy up according to the sequence you believe it should follow!”

The elder looked at the toy in bewilderment, and inspected it closely. Each button had a small word written on it: strike, poke,

pierce....etc. After some thought, the elder slowly pressed them. At the same time, Suo Jia took out another toy, and after opening the cover on its back, quickly programmed that one too.

Soon, both of them had pretty much finished their arrangements. Under Suo Jia's command, they simultaneously placed their toys onto the ground, and Suo Jia declared, "When I say 'start', we'll both press the start button at the same time!"

Although the elder didn't understand Suo Jia's commands, he still nodded. Following this...Suo Jia gave the command, and the two pressed the buttons on the toys' heads in unison.

The next instant...everyone watched as the two, less than a meter tall toys waved the large swords in their hands into a dance as they exchanged blows against each other in a fight. One could only be victorious if they managed to deal 3-4 blows in succession. Suo Jia's toy ended up being knocked to the ground by the elder's toy with a sweep!

All the hunters were stunned as they silently stared at the two toys on the ground. Although the fight had only been between two toys, it had demonstrated so much. Those accurate, fluid, and connected movements made it practically seem like a showdown between two experts!

Suo Jia smiled in satisfaction when he saw the spectators' amazed expressions, and loudly announced, "Did everyone see that the one I'd programmed was defeated by the one Mister Elder had set up? After using these toys, the children will definitely have their zeal and self-motivation sparked. These will not only help teach them all the basic warrior battle skills, but more importantly, allow them to understand their uses and relationships between each other. It forces their minds to move, and will teach them how to use strategic techniques starting from a young age!"

The elder looked at Suo Jia with a gaze filled with admiration.

“Heavens! That’s really too mystical! Are you really willing to trade such amazing things for just 10 Golden Raccoon Dog furs?”

Suo Jia smiled, and confirmed it with a nod as he firmly responded, “That’s right. 10 Golden Raccoon Dog furs are enough. I’ve already said that before. I will definitely always abide to the words I say. A promise is the same thing as my life!”

Faced with Suo Jia’s magnanimity, the elder seemed afraid that Suo Jia would regret it. Thus, he quickly gathered the villagers to trade with him. Soon afterwards...100 toys and 400 four colored potions were all shipped out. At the same time, 5000 Golden Raccoon Dog furs were given to Suo Jia.

After hearing that Suo Jia was actually suggesting a price of 10 coins to purchase the furs, the villagers each sold 2. However...the mountain villagers didn’t seem to care much for money. Thus, by the time the sky had darkened, Suo Jia had only purchased 1000 furs. After that point, nobody else was willing to sell them.

The elder saw Suo Jia’s disappointed expression and smiled mysteriously. “Mister Suo Jia, I know that you really want to buy some Golden Raccoon Dog furs, but you no longer have anything to persuade us with.”

“Oh?” Suo Jia asked to the elder in curiosity. “Mister Elder, is there anything else you want? If there is, I hope that you tell me. I’ll definitely be able to think of a way to give it to you!”

“Gulu...” The elder swallowed hard, and narrowed his eyes. “I’m sure Mister Suo Jia knows that as hunters, we eat meat all year round and can’t grow anything. That’s why...if you can manage to get Xiangshui rice for us to eat to our heart’s content, I can help you gather 5000 Golden Raccoon Dog furs!”

Chapter 316 – Powerful Talent Pt. 1

“Xiangshui rice?” Suo Jia was completely puzzled by the name. He hadn’t ever heard of this kind of special product from other adventurers, nor did he know where he could purchase it from.

Suo Jia tentatively asked the elder, “Um...helping you get Xiangshui rice is fine, but, where exactly is this rice being produced?”

The elder looked at Suo Jia in confusion and said, “Your question is really strange. You’re a merchant, so you obviously should know where it’s produced. We only got some from occasional travelers, and have eaten it only once, so we don’t know where it’s produced.”

Suo Jia bitterly smiled and shook his head. He knew that these hunters had pretty much spent their entire lives without ever leaving the area around the village. They couldn’t possibly know where the Xiangshui rice was produced. After all...if the hundreds of adventurers didn’t even know, how would some hunters locked up in a village know?

Suo Jia firmly nodded and said, “Alright. Although I don’t know where to buy the Xiangshui rice either, it’s not a big deal. I’ll work hard and gather information. I just hope that you guys will hunt some more Golden Raccoon Dogs so that I won’t busy myself for no reason.”

The elder’s face turned more solemn as he seriously said, “Don’t worry. Food comes first; we hunters value food the most. As long as we get our hands on food, we definitely won’t be lacking in any materials on the magical beasts’ bodies.”

Suo Jia nodded, and prepared to bid farewell. However, he suddenly remembered something, and after a while, hesitantly asked, “That’s right, Mister Elder, I heard that there’s a type of magic fruit here called Toughening Fruit. Do...you have any in

your village?”

“Toughening Fruits?” The elder looked at Suo Jia in bewilderment and asked, “Do you want to eat them?”

“Mmm...” Suo Jia firmly nodded and chuckled, “You must also know that this type of fruit can boost a person’s defensive ability, so...”

Without waiting for Suo Jia to finish speaking, the elder laughed out loud and said, “Each family has its own type of Toughening Fruit. Look...isn’t that right next to you one?”

“Hm?” Suo Jia looked in the direction the elder’s hand was pointed towards. There was a row of short, green shrubs neatly aligned next to the tent. A small, delicate, and unique tree stood there in the center of these shrubs, facing the winds. When one looked into the distance, the perimeter of their furthest line of vision would be able to see at least hundreds of these small trees.

These little trees were only about 1 meter tall. They were light blue in color, and their branches were slender. Its figure was extremely elegant. There was a light blue fruit at the top of every tree. If one didn’t look very closely, it was impossible to discover it.

The elder laughed heartily at Suo Jia’s astonished expression. “These things have already been growing in our village for hundreds of years. Both adults and children eat them at a young age. If you want to eat them, go ahead and pick it. However, be careful, only the blue fruits are ripe!”

“That’s...” Suo Jia excitedly said, “Mister Elder, how much is each fruit? If...”

“Tch...” The elder casually waved his hand before Suo Jia finished speaking and generously said, “Don’t keep asking about money this and money that. Although you’re a merchant, you’re also a friend of Enchanting Village. How could we accept money

for some mere fruits? Just eat them however much you want. However, take careful note that you can only eat one a week, or else complications will arise.”

Suo Jia didn't rush to pick the fruit, and instead shifted his eyes as he said to the elder in a low voice, “Then thank you very much. However...what ranks of Toughening Fruits do you guys have here?”

The elder's expression suddenly turned serious. He looked around carefully, and after confirming that there wasn't anyone around, he whispered back, “The reason our village is established here is because this is where Toughening Fruits gather. The village mostly has ranks 1, 2, 3 fruits, but there are Toughening Fruits rank 4 and above in the forests around our village!”

Suo Jia excitedly nodded and impatiently asked, “Mister Elder, could you help point me towards the direction of some rank 4 and above Toughening Fruits?”

“Hehe...” The elder smiled proudly and nodded. “That's fine. As long as you get us some Xiangshui rice, I'll help point them out for you. Moreover...the more rice you get us, the higher the level of the Toughening Fruits I show you will be! If you can get us enough Xiangshui rice to last our whole village a year, I'll even give you the sole rank 10 Toughening Fruit!”

Suo Jia nodded and impatiently said, “Mister Elder, then let's come to an agreement now. You'd better not go back on your word, keep the fruit for me. In half a year at most, I'll definitely bring you a year's worth of Xiangshui rice!”

“Ah!” The elder's jaw dropped open at Suo Jia's words and he said incredulously, “Are you serious? I was only joking with you just now. Although that fruit is precious, it's not worth...”

“Stop!” Suo Jia abruptly lifted his hand and interrupted the elder's words. “Mister Elder, whether it's worth it or not is my business. You only need to properly watch over that tree. I'll

definitely get that Xiangshui rice over!”

Suo Jia shifted his gaze and said expectantly, “That’s right, Mister Elder, does your village have any other magic fruits aside from Toughening Fruits?”

The elder bitterly shook his head and helplessly said, “Your words really are strange. Don’t tell me you didn’t know? Different magic fruits can’t grow together. Each area only has one type of magic fruit!”

Suo Jia nodded in understanding, and didn’t continue asking any further. Instead, he ran straight to the adjacent trees and picked two cyan colored Toughening Fruits. Just as he was prepared to place them into his mouth, the elder abruptly shouted at him to stop.

The elder shot a panicked look at Suo Jia and nervously exclaimed, “Hey, hey, hey! What do you plan on doing? You can only eat one fruit at a time. If you eat two, you’ll have problems. If you don’t die, you’ll at least become a cripple!”

“Hehe...” Suo Jia smiled mysteriously and nodded. “I know that I can only eat one per sitting. The reason I picked two was because I still have a companion that wants to eat one.”

Suo Jia waved a hand. In that instant...the space rippled as the Diamond Dragon’s milky-white figure appeared in mid-air. The next moment...the Diamond Dragon shouted out happily and dived into Suo Jia’s arms, intimately rubbing its head against Suo Jia.

Suo Jia picked up a Toughening Fruit and put it up against the Diamond Dragon while coaxing it, “Come on...this is very delicious. Hurry up and eat one.”

The Diamond Dragon obediently opened its mouth. At the same time, Suo Jia began to move the grape-sized Toughening Fruit into the Diamond Dragon’s mouth.

“Wait a moment!” The instant the elder saw that the Diamond

Dragon was about to eat it, he interrupted once more, “Let me confirm something, you guys have never eaten Toughening Fruits before? If this is your first time, then you must eat rank 1 Toughening Fruits. If you eat something past that rank, you’ll definitely feel the shock from an unbearable rush of energy. Although it isn’t fatal, you’ll definitely still suffer great harm!”

Hearing the elder’s words, Suo Jia’s hand shook, and the Toughening Fruit in his hand fell to the ground. He stared at the elder in shock and asked in astonishment, “What? Wasn’t the fruit I took just now a rank one Toughening Fruit?”

“Mnn...” The elder nodded, and said with certainty, “What you were holding just now was a rank 3 Toughening Fruit. If you’ve never eaten these before, you’ll barely survive if you eat that, if not die!”

“That’s....” Suo Jia wiped the sweat off his forehead and said with fear, “Heavens, it’s really so dangerous. These fruits all look identical. Who knows whether it’s rank 2 or rank 3. How do you guys differentiate them?”

The elder shook his head and smiled, “It looks like there’s a lot of things you don’t understand about our world. That’s fine, I guess, I’ll just tell you. In reality, regardless of whether they’re magic fruits or different types of energy, they can all be gauged with a rank-less communal magic. This magic is called—Spirit’s Eye!”

Chapter 317 – Powerful Talent Pt. 2

Spirit's Eye was a type of internal system magic. Due it being a practical-type magic, it was a magic that could never be lost even after a calamity, especially on the Greater Trade Routes. Moreover, it had become an essential magic to everyone.

Even though Spirit's Eye was a vision type magic, it actually wasn't something that only mages could activate. A person of any occupation could use it. With the Spirit's Eye, one could determine the intensity of energy.

Of course, the Spirit's Eye had a limit as well. An amateur couldn't possibly see through an expert's strength with it. On the other hand, an expert's ability to see through the amateur was guaranteed. Although everyone knew the Spirit's Eye, the limits to their observation depended on their levels of strength.

With the elder's patient explanations, Suo Jia soon understood the secret mysteries of the Spirit's Eye. With some special mantras and methods, one could definitely observe someone with their own level of strength, and things weaker than them as well.

Based on the methods the elder mentioned, Suo Jia activated the Spirit's Eye. Immediately...a bright ring of light appeared around the elder. At the same time, a strip of energy appeared on the elder's right side.

The elder saw that Suo Jia had successfully activated Spirit's Eye, and smiled. "Right now, you should be able to see my energy strip, right? Through the Spirit's Eye, that energy strip can be one of ten different colors. From lowest to highest, the colors are: scarlet, orange, yellow, green, cyan, blue, purple, black, white, and multicolored. Correspondingly, these are various color levels of experts."

Here, the elder paused for a moment, before continuing, "Of course...this order isn't absolute. There are many people with low

defensive color levels, but possess extremely powerful battle power. However...although people with low color levels aren't necessarily weak, those with high color levels are definitely very fierce characters. That's why you must be very careful from now on. If you encounter someone with high color level, you must be cautious. This indicates that they possess extremely powerful body strength, practically inhuman!"

Suo Jia was shocked when he looked at the elder and saw that his energy strip was actually blue colored. It was no wonder these first residents on the Greater Trade Routes could live here. That powerful defensive shield alone was enough to exhaust the opposite party's energy.

Suo Jia turned around and looked at the surrounding Toughening Fruit trees. This time, Suo Jia soon understood the differences between them. With the Spirit's Eye, an energy strip appeared next to each tree. The colors were either scarlet, orange, or yellow. Just as the elder had said, Suo Jia was undoubtedly supposed to have chosen the scarlet fruit, as that was the rank 1 fruit.

Suo Jia looked at his own body. There was also an energy strip in front of him but...it was clear, without any color. This meant that...Suo Jia's body had absolutely no defensive ability. Any random blade could penetrate straight through his body.

In reality, Suo Jia also knew that, without eating Toughening Fruits, the human body's strength was terrifyingly weak. Even a warrior couldn't possibly block any attack. It could be said that relying on the body alone meant that the human had no strength to speak of, and wasn't even comparable to a wild beast. At the very least, wild beasts still had tough leather.

Suo Jia looked over the Diamond Dragon. Just like Suo Jia, the Diamond Dragon's energy strip was also clear. It didn't have any hint of defensive energy at all. Although the Diamond Dragon was widely known for its defense, it was clearly only able to rely on a

defense of 10 heavy Glacial Armor layers at the moment. Once the Glacial Armor shattered, the Diamond Dragon would be like a mere lamb.

Suo Jia grabbed a glowing, scarlet Toughening Fruit into the Diamond Dragon's mouth. After sensing the object, the dragon happily closed its eyes, and with a large gulp, swallowed it whole.

Suo Jia watched as the energy strip next to the Diamond Dragon was quickly permeated with a scarlet mist. At the same time, a red streak appeared at the bottom of the energy strip.

The elder looked at the Diamond Dragon with interest and praised, "This little pet isn't bad. It has a very fast absorption ability. You must take note that only after this entire energy strip has been filled with red color will it be able to eat the next rank fruit. Otherwise, complications will arise."

Suo Jia nodded gratefully, and tossed the other Toughening Fruit in his hand into his mouth. In that instant, the sweet juice quickly dripped down along his throat, and an indescribably refreshing feeling arose from the center of his body.

From the corners of his eyes, he looked at himself, and saw a red mist surge forth into the energy strip exposed by the Spirit's Eye. Its movement was even more violent and extreme than the Diamond Dragon's.

"Aiya!" The elder exclaimed in shock and praised, "Heavens, you look so frail and weak, but your endurance is surprisingly strong!"

The elder sighed as he shook his head and continued, "Originally, I'd thought that you were a thief or a mage. But only now do I finally realize, you have to be a warrior. Aside from warriors, there are no other people that can possibly possess such long-lasting endurance. It's really too amazing."

"What? Wait, wait, wait, wait..." Suo Jia suddenly interrupted the other party and said with uncertainty, "What did you just say?"

You said I was a warrior? How is that possible...”

“Hehe...” The elder patted Suo Jia’s shoulders and smiled, “Don’t bother pretending any more. There’s no way you can keep up the act in front of me. At your age, possessing such high endurance is something that is rarely seen every century, even among warriors. With such a powerful physique, how would a mage be possible?”

“That’s...” Suo Jia couldn’t help but close his mouth. He knew that the only reason he had such powerful endurance was because back when he’d used magic potions, he’d consumed a great amount of Endurance Potions. However, this was unrelated to his physical strength. In reality, his physical strength wasn’t really high at all.

The elder continued, “Although everyone can only eat one Toughening Fruit per week, each person’s energy absorption rate is completely different. Those with more powerful endurance can absorb more, and reach much higher points.”

The elder thought for a bit before continuing, “For you, as long as you eat about four Toughening Fruits, you can reach the completed scarlet level realm. Your Diamond Dragon needs to eat six. You must know...you two already count as extremely gifted and outstanding figures!”

“Um...” Suo Jia hesitantly looked at the elder and asked, “Then how many Toughening Fruits must a typical person eat to complete the scarlet level?”

The old man muttered to himself for a bit before he knit his brows together and said, “That’s not a set number. Typically speaking, eating 10 fruits to complete the scarlet level would already make a person qualify as an expert. Some people need to eat hundreds to just barely complete the level. Although they all only eat one per week, some people must eat multiple to increase just a strand of energy, while you only need to eat one to increase by $\frac{1}{2}$!”

Suo Jia stared at the elder in shock, completely unable to believe

it. Could such a good thing really happen? He was extremely astonished, especially after hearing that some people needed to eat 100 fruits to complete the scarlet level. If these people ate one fruit per week, then wouldn't it take them two years to finish?

Suo Jia did a rough estimation; according to the process the elder had described, Suo Jia only need a month to complete the scarlet level, while the Diamond Dragon only need 1.5 months. Wasn't that a bit too extreme? That was just too big of a difference. He was a genuine ice mage, not some kind of warrior.

Suo Jia raised his head to look at the elder, "If that's really the case, then does that mean that every four fruits I eat, I'll be able to go up an energy level?!"

The elder firmly nodded and happily said, "In reality, the speed at which you improve is directly related to your absorption talent. No matter which energy level you're at, you'll only need to eat four fruits to reach its maximum state!"

Suo Jia stared at the elder in shock and asked incredulously, "That means I only need 10 months to reach the illusion multicolored level! That doesn't seem very likely!"

Chapter 318 – Explosion Of Wealth

Overnight Pt. 1

The elder looked at Suo Jia in exasperation and bitterly smiled, “Of course not. Even if your innate gift was at the absolute top, you must also obtain high ranked Toughening Fruits. From my knowledge, our single rank 10 illusion Toughening Fruit is the only one within a thousand meter circumference, and you need to eat four of them to reach the completed state. Let me ask you...where would you go to get so many high ranked Toughening Fruits?”

“That’s...” Suo Jia finally calmed down after hearing the elder’s question. At the same time, the elder continued, “Moreover, don’t you know that humans have limits? Within a limited boundary, you can achieve an extremely rapid growth. However, after that limit, your growth will stop. You can’t possibly think that just eating these fruits would guarantee improvement, right? If that were the case, would I have stopped in this realm?”

Suo Jia shook his head in disappointment. Although he clearly knew that was impossible, Suo Jia still hoped for his idea just now to become reality. Unfortunately, nothing came so cheaply in this world.

Suo Jia bid farewell to the elder, cleaned up his things, then began to cultivate. The next morning, Suo Jia woke up very early because...today was the day he would head out.

Having heard that Suo Jia would get Xiangshui rice for everybody, all the villagers gathered around him early that morning to give him gifts. The elder even personally handed a credential of trust over to Suo Jia. It was only now that Suo Jia came to know that this elder was actually Enchanting Village’s chief!

Before leaving, Suo Jia stubbornly picked a Toughening Fruit and placed it within his interspatial bag, hoping that its internal

environment could sustain the Toughening Fruit's condition for a period of time. Unfortunately, the village head soon destroyed his dreams. Even if inside the interspatial ring, the magical fruits definitely wouldn't last that long. They'd rot in two days at best.

Suo Jia could only take the fruit out in disappointment. There was no way he'd let the fruit mold in his interspatial ring. The elder saw Suo Jia's crestfallen expression and helplessly shook his head. "Don't be too upset, the Toughening Fruit isn't some kind of rare fruit or anything. You can find them anywhere within the nearby thousand kilometer perimeter. As long as you recognize these fruits, you can pick them however much you want. Although most of them will be around rank 3 Toughening Fruits, these are definitely enough for you at the moment."

The villagers all sent Suo Jia off as he left Enchanting Village. Together with the Diamond Dragon, Suo Jia made the first step of their journey. That armored chariot was finally disassembled by Suo Jia and stored inside the interspatial ring. If he tried to rush down the road, Suo Jia definitely wouldn't be able to advance at all with his strength alone.

The reason the Greater Trade Routes were so terrifying was precisely because the magical beasts here were extremely powerful. Destroying a single one required using up a large amount of energy. It could be said that mages ranked below a Full-Fledged Mage weren't qualified to come here. Even the weakest of magical beasts were impossible to eliminate. Before the magical beasts' energy shields shattered, the mage's magic power would be exhausted first.

Fortunately, Suo Jia had already reached the peak Great Mage realm. In particular, in terms of magic power, he'd far surpassed the Great Mage realm by severalfold. Even if he hadn't used the four colored potions, Suo Jia definitely would've been able to destroy those magical beasts.

Before he'd gotten very far from the village, Suo Jia once again

encountered a magical beast interception. There were seven Cyan Wolves roaring at him as they blocked his way. Their blood-red eyes were firmly locked onto Suo Jia, as well as the Diamond Dragon in his arms.

Suo Jia snorted. Having honed his strength for so long now, there was obviously no way Suo Jia would be afraid of these Cyan Wolves. With both his hands cupped around the Diamond Dragon, Suo Jia suddenly pushed it outwards. In that moment, the Diamond Dragon's body was tossed high up several meters through the air. At the same time, Suo Jia shouted, "Stop sleeping, little pet. It's time for battle!"

Hearing Suo Jia's voice...the Diamond Dragon suddenly opened its eyes in midair and happily chirped. An azure glow burst forth as layer after layer of Glacial Armor began to surround its body.

"Rumble!" With a fierce boom, the Diamond Dragon finally landed back down onto the ground. The weight of its enormous, thick and solid body seemed to cause the entire ground to shake for a moment.

A blue figure stabilized itself, then appeared on the Diamond Dragon's left shoulder with a flash. If one looked closer, they'd realize that it was Suo Jia. At the moment....Suo Jia was standing on the 6 meter high Diamond Dragon's shoulder. With a smile, Suo Jia activated Spirit's Eye and surveyed the Cyan Wolves' defensive energy shield statistics.

In reality, the energy shield produced by the Toughening Fruits had its own name on the Greater Trade Routes—Life Protection. It had the same value as a life! One had to use up something with the value of a life in order to fatally harm another living creature.

Suo Jia saw that the Cyan Wolves' Life Protection was scarlet colored, and he shook his head in disdain. Suo Jia hadn't imagined that these things' Life Protections were only scarlet level; they were really too weak.

Suo Jia didn't actually activate Ice Roar. For the sake of better understanding Life Protection, Suo Jia obviously wouldn't let such a chance pass by. After all...these Cyan Wolves couldn't be compared to the Crimson Bears. All the wolves had was high speed. Their attack power wasn't very strong, and they had absolutely no way of inflicting any substantial damage on the Diamond Dragon.

Suo Jia stretched his right hand forward, and a Mysterious Ice Arrow glittering with blue light instantly sprung out from his hand, and accurately hit the shoulder blade of a Cyan Wolf. With a flash of brilliant blue light, 1/10 of the Cyan Wolf's energy strip had disappeared!

"Ack!" Suo Jia couldn't help but let out a strange shout at this sight. Originally...Suo Jia had thought that if it took a month to complete the scarlet level, it would be really weak. But in reality, Suo Jia's full strength Mysterious Ice Arrow could only reduce 1/10 of the Cyan Wolf's Life Protection. That was too ridiculous!

Suo Jia waved his hand, two Ice Roars were instantly activated in succession amidst the pack of seven Cyan Wolves. Hundred of piercing ice blades whooshed in a circle, slashing at the pack of wolves.

At closer inspection, the Cyan Wolves' red energy strips were sharply decreasing under the Ice Roar's attack. Once the Ice Roar finally finished its devastation, the seven Cyan Wolves all collapsed on the ground. Even their corpses had been frozen into ice cubes!

Suo Jia frowned. He knew that in terms of single attacks, he needed 10 to eliminate them. If he used AoE attacks, like the Ice Roar, he needed 20 of those ice blade storms cutting at them continuously to break through their Life Protections.

Suo Jia began to ponder this deeply. These Cyan Wolves were the weakest magical beasts on the Greater Trade Routes, and were scarlet level monsters. But these weakest beasts had already

consumed so much of Suo Jia's energy. If their numbers were just slightly greater, wouldn't Suo Jia's energy be completely exhausted?

Suo Jia had learned from the village chief that while the Cyan Wolves were the weakest, they often moved in packs of 10 at minimum, and thousands at maximum. Suo Jia could ascertain that a pack of only 100 of these wolves would be enough to force Suo Jia to miserably flee.

With this knowledge, Suo Jia would have to act more careful in the future. Fortunately, Suo Jia had detailed maps. These had been developed by adventurers, and allowed him to evade places where powerful magical beasts gathered. It marked the safest path. Even if he encountered magical beasts here, they wouldn't be very powerful.

He swiftly progressed on his journey. Finally...after a week had passed, Suo Jia was delighted to discover that his own Life Protection had reached the $\frac{1}{2}$ level, as expected. The Diamond Dragon hadn't slacked either, and his energy strip now had a red line that marked the $\frac{1}{5}$ part.

Suo Jia calculated that a week had already passed, so he thoroughly searched the area. As expected, he very easily found rank 1 Toughening Fruits. After both he and the Diamond Dragon ate one, that red mist once again rushed into the Life Protection energy strips.

Chapter 319 – Explosion Of Wealth

Overnight Pt. 2

Finally, after an entire month had passed and Suo Jia had finally completed the scarlet level, he also reached his objective—Tide City. It was an exceptionally grand city that sat next to a lake.

The reason he'd chosen Tide City as his destination was because all the materials he'd obtained from the adventurers stated that this place was the largest city in the first checkpoint. The Golden Raccoon Dog furs were welcomed so much here, more so than one could ever imagine.

After pulling out a detailed map of Tide City, Suo Jia quickly found the largest furs shop in the city. He haggled over the price for a very long time and in the end...Suo Jia wasn't able to negotiate a single cent. It was only now that Suo Jia finally realized: on the Greater Trade Routes, merchants couldn't haggle prices during business transactions.

It might seem strange, but that was actually part of the rules here. The merchants here all believed that if one haggled, that would mean the prices they bid were illegitimate and overstated. That's why...for the sake of their reputations, merchants would never perform any business like that, nor would they ever bargain. Prices were simply set.

Of course, although one couldn't bargain, merchants also looked at the customer's menu. Nameless people like Suo Jia definitely couldn't get very high prices. If it were a more famous merchant, they naturally wouldn't dare to recklessly quote a price.

Suo Jia tightly knit his brows together. Although the opposite party's offer was already the market price of 100, and they hadn't been reckless about quoting it, Suo Jia had stockpiled a great amount of goods. If they were just sold like that, it would seem like a such a waste.

These Golden Raccoon Dog furs were the most luxurious consumer goods here. Although they were half a ping in size, the truly useful parts were the two pieces the size of one's palm: the sides of the Golden Raccoon Dog's flank.

Golden Raccoon Dog furs definitely represented any person's status and identity. Normal people often didn't even get the chance to see it, let alone wear it.

Right now, Suo Jia was holding a large amount of furs. Naturally, he wanted more favorable offers. However, the other party's offer was something that Suo Jia couldn't accept. Even if he sold the furs piece by piece, it would be with this price. Now he was selling so many, how could he only accept 100 per piece?

Seeing Suo Jia's dissatisfied expression, the furs manager felt great regret for naming such a low price. If he'd known there were so many of these furs earlier, he definitely wouldn't have offered something so low. But now that the price had already been named, regretting it was useless.

Suo Jia saw the store manager's expression, and finally realized something. After a bit, he firmly stated, "How about this, Boss. I agree to your price, 100 per piece is fine. However...I have a condition!"

"Condition? What is the condition, tell me quickly!" The store boss urged after hearing that the situation could be remedied.

Suo Jia smiled and whispered into the store manager's ear, "I can sell you 6000 furs for the price of 100 per fur, but...you must help me gather 1000 bags of Xiangshui rice!"

The furs store manager couldn't help but furrow his brows at this. Although Xiangshui rice wasn't really expensive, 1000 bags would end up being a pretty high price too.

The store manager took out a calculating machine and quickly added it up. After a while, he bitterly smiled as he discovered that

with the addition of 1000 bags of Xiangshui rice, the price of 6000 furs was already nearing the baseline of his money. There was no longer much difference in profits between buying them and not buying them.

Suo Jia soon realized from the store manager's expression that the guy had definitely been mistaken. Suo Jia had only meant to request the store manager to help him collect the rice; Suo Jia would be the one actually spending money. However, the store manager clearly thought that he needed to hand over money for it too.

However, what excited Suo Jia was that judging from the store manager's expression, he seemed to be able to accept even if he was paying. It seemed that it just meant earning a bit less.

Suo Jia gave his acting skills a spin and said firmly, "Boss, this is the first time we're doing business together, so I can't let you pay. I know that you can't earn much with this kind of price. We can do this instead..."

Suo Jia paused a bit before continuing, "I'll sell the 6000 furs to you for 100 per fur, and you help me get 1000 bags of Xiangshui rice. In addition to this, I'll send you another 364 furs to you for free. What do you think?"

The store manager's expression drastically changed. If he was getting 364 furs for free, in addition to the 6000 in profits, he would be earning a decent amount, not too much or little. Business was difficult; if one could earn just the slightest bit more, who would be willing to reject the offer? This past year...living hadn't been easy!

The store manager's sorrowful expression made Suo Jia add, "Boss, I know that you'll be losing a bit this time, but don't worry. I'm determined to make a living here. We'll be doing business together for a long time in the future. I'll owe you this time, and I can make up for it next time. What do you think?"

Suo Jia's temptation finally moved the store manager's heart. He resolutely nodded and said, "Alright. Just as you say, this is our first time doing business together, so it's fine if I earn a bit less this time. I agree to your condition!"

During the next few days, the store manager quickly collected 1000 bags of Xiangshui rice, and finished his business with Suo Jia. Suo Jia excitedly took the 600,000 Trade Route coins, practically unable to believe that it was all real. He'd not only been able to sell the furs for a price of 100, but more importantly, Suo Jia didn't have to spend any money at all to fulfill his deal with the village chief—1000 bags of Xiangshui rice was enough for 400 people to eat for a year. After all...hunters still had meat as their main diet.

After the transaction was completed, Suo Jia wasn't in any rush to leave. Instead, he took the 700,000 Trade Route coins and rushed to the bank in Tide City. There, he obtained a Trade Route status card. This kind of card was one that only merchants that had entered the Greater Trade Routes had the qualifications to obtain. Moreover, in order to ensure prestige, one had to have at least 500,000 Trade Route coins to apply for it.

After receiving the status card, Suo Jia rushed straight to Tide City's Adventurer Union. He consigned the 100 toy automatons he'd made on the way for sale there. It wasn't just the magic automatons, but the normal four colored potions as well. These potions were no longer much use to the adventurers on the Greater Trade Routes. After all...these potions weren't refined, and they replenished too little energy. Without any practical use, they only attracted the residents on the Greater Trade Routes.

The Adventurer Union was actually opened specifically for the adventurer occupation. Adventurers, thieves, and even mercenaries all needed a means to carry out a transaction for obtaining goods from various channels. This was the only way the items could be exchanged for money, or use the money to buy items they needed. It was the only communication link between

the adventurer occupation and the local residents on the Greater Trade Routes.

The rules for consigning a sale first required one to buy one's own vendor's booth. One had to pay a usage fee of 100 Trade Route coins for each vendor's booth every day. Each vendor's booth had one salesperson attached, without requiring an extra payment.

Once hundreds of magic automatons were given to the salesperson, Suo Jia gave a detailed warning about them. Most things didn't need to be said, but these toy magic automatons' functions and special features needed to be clearly explained. Otherwise, if the other party didn't understand how to use them, how would they be willing to spend money to buy them?

After obtaining a status card, there was no longer any need to use physical money for business transactions between Suo Jia and other merchants. The cards could simply be combined and the money could be directly transferred. It was convenient and simple. Moreover...the money earned from the goods sold in the Commerce Union would be automatically transferred to the card. In other words, the status card was the merchant's mark!

During the following week, Suo Jia visited various parts of Tide City. Suo Jia wasn't necessarily just idly strolling around, but rather carefully surveying the market. An in-depth inspection was necessary to discover any hidden business opportunities. Moreover...one had to personally gather materials to obtain the most trustworthy information.

A week later, Suo Jia finally gathered enough information. However, just as he was prepared to bring the Xiangshui rice and rush back to Enchanting Village, a difficult issue that Suo Jia had never considered appeared before him.

Chapter 320 – Encountering Robbers Pt. 1

Originally, Suo Jia had planned on using the interspatial rings to store the 1000 bags of Xiangshui rice. However, once the store manager had led Suo Jia to a warehouse and allowed him to personally see the mountains-like pile of rice, Suo Jia was completely dumbfounded.

Originally, Suo Jia had thought that the rice bags would only be small bags of 10-15kg. However, after witnessing it himself, Suo Jia suddenly realized how wrong his thoughts had been. One bag of rice was a burlap sack of 150kg!

Suo Jia could make many interspatial rings, but they had to be worn on his hands, as they relied on spirit power to maintain their states. Once taken off, they would lose the support of the spirit power, and everything within the interspatial rings would be pushed out onto the ground. In other words, Suo Jia could only wear 10 rings at most.

Suo Jia's peak grade interspatial ring could only hold 100 cubic meters of space; it couldn't even store 100 bags of rice. As for the other interspatial rings, they could only hold 10 cubic meters. Thus, even if Suo Jia emptied out all his interspatial rings and stored them with rice, he still wouldn't be able to fit in even 200 bags.

By rough calculations, going one way from here to Enchanting Village required a month. If he wanted to store these 1000 bags of rice into interspatial rings and bring them back, it would require at least 5 round trips, which would be an entire 10 months of time. This was too slow; Suo Jia didn't want to waste so much effort and become a porter.

But unfortunately, Suo Jia recalled the rank 10 Toughening Fruit that the village chief had promised him. That kind of thing was extremely hard to get. Even after scouting out the area, there

would only be one at Enchanting Village within this 1000 kilometer circumference.

Of course, there couldn't just be one rank 10 Toughening Fruit. However...if existences like this rank 10 Toughening Fruit grew in ordinary places, they'd all be plucked by people at rank 5 or 6, before they even grew to rank 10. These could only continue growing if they were in a hidden or harsh location, obviously outside the area at which people would be able to locate it.

When Suo Jia saw the rice piled like mountains in front of him, he blanked out. What could he do? What was he supposed to do now? Giving up wasn't acceptable, not giving up was also unacceptable. When he looked at the large pile of rice currently under his possession, Suo Jia felt so much agony that he almost lost his mind.

Perhaps he could employ some of the villagers to wear the rings and help Suo Jia ship the goods. But if these were really so easily shipped, Suo Jia wouldn't have needed to be the one to purchase them. There were many magical beasts that appeared along the way, enough to swallow normal citizens whole without a single bone remaining..

Of course, Suo Jia had also considered asking outside adventurers, like mercenaries, to help bring the goods over. However, Suo Jia knew that looking for an adventurer that had entered as a mercenary group wasn't any easier than searching for a merchant group. In short, this question didn't even need to be considered.

After thinking for a long time, Suo Jia finally chose to temporarily give up on this transaction. After all...Suo Jia couldn't waste 10 months of time to complete it. However, Suo Jia wouldn't dumbly drop it either. For now, he could only use a storage car to hold the 1000 bags, and keep it there until he had the ability to finish the transaction. Either way, the village chief hadn't given a time limit. Waiting a bit longer would, on the contrary, allow the

villagers to gather more Golden Raccoon Dog furs.

Most importantly, according to Suo Jia's current state, he didn't need such a high level Toughening Fruit. Even if the rank 10 Illusion Toughening Fruit was gifted to Suo Jia, it would be completely wasted. Although it would've been given for free, Suo Jia wouldn't dare eat it, as it that would be equivalent to committing suicide.

After giving up on this transaction, Suo Jia rushed to the local Adventurer Union to inquire some information. After grasping Tide City's commerce needs, Suo Jia needed to make rational decisions about how to perform business that would earn the most money while also allowing him to greatly boost his own strength.

After reaching the Adventurer Union, Suo Jia paid 1000 Trade Route coins to request the gathering of information. This meant that he'd be able to receive the information he wanted from the Adventurer Union.

The reason Suo Jia was so obsessed with doing the business right now was actually because he didn't want to waste any time. While running around doing business, he could also increase his strength with battles. The money used for business could also allow him to purchase various magic fruits, which really let him kill many birds with one stone.

Although the little Frosty Wurm was also eating the Toughening Fruits, Suo Jia knew that the Frost Wurm should really be eating Freezing Fruits. Once the little Frost Wurm's Glacial Armor made a breakthrough, any Toughening Fruit, no matter how high level, would be to no avail. The Toughening Fruit's highest realm still couldn't be compared to the Diamond Dragon's final form.

Although the Toughening Fruit at its greatest realm was basically unrivalled, a powerful attack was still enough to consume its energy. However, the Diamond Dragon's Glacial Armor was different. That was basically something that was immune to both

physical and magical attacks. No matter how one attacked, it'd be useless. The Diamond Dragon's Glacial Armor was something even stronger than steel. The Glacial Armor at absolute zero was particularly unbreakable to any force.

Giving all the gathered Freezing Fruits to the Diamond Dragon was to lower its temperature even more. With the dragon's originally low temperature as a foundation, the Glacial Armor and the Diamond Dragon's attacks could be cooled further, reaching a terrifying level.

The Freezing Fruits could count as a supernatural power, while the Diamond Dragon's Glacial Armor counted as a magic. Once the supernatural power and magic were overlaid upon each other, it would reach a frightening level that no typical person could even imagine. It was precisely due to this reason that the most powerful experts in the outside world became tiny shrimps on the Greater Trade Routes.

The information Suo Jia was looking for were the locations of these Freezing Fruits. The Freezing Fruits were a type of rare and precious fruit with extremely high prices; a rank 1 Freezing Fruit already costed a crazy amount of 100,000 for one. But fortunately, because of its preciousness, their source locations were very easy to find.

There were already various fruits recorded on the Greater Trade Routes, with a total of no less than 100 types. Each type of fruit represented a different type of energy, and a person would at most be able to utilize two types. The first was a human's tenaciousness, a force compatible with all magic fruits, and the second was one's main ability. The choice of main ability represented the person's true level.

From the information he received, Suo Jia came to know the location of the Freezing Fruits— Freezing Plains. Although this place only had a few rank 1-3 Freezing Fruits, this was already enough for Suo Jia. Even if there were higher ranked fruits, they

weren't things that Suo Jia could afford at the moment.

A rank 1 Freezing Fruits costed 100,000, a rank 2 costed 500,000, and a rank 3 reached a frightening price of a million. These Freezing Fruits' freezing abilities were Heaven grade in terms of energy. It was precisely due to this reason that their prices were so excessive.

According to different energies, and the level of their might, the magic fruits' ranks were further split into grades. The various energies had different levels of might, and the magic fruits were split into 8 ranks: Heaven, Earth, Black, Yellow, Cosmos, Universe, Great, and Desolate.* The Freezing Fruits were one of the highest grade fruits: Heaven grade. It was also one of the most highly demanded and most expensive fruits.

However, since Suo Jia had already decided on the Diamond's Dragon direction of growth, he wouldn't shrink back from the fruits no matter how expensive they were. Each amount of money equated to a commodity. The more expensive something was, the greater in might it was. This was something that countless predecessors had tested.

The Freezing Plains were located in an extremely cold place 1000 km away. The famous city there was Icebound City. Although Suo Jia wasn't that familiar with its needs, he had been raised in a cold place, so he knew what the people there would want.

Tide City's special product was the Xiangshui rice, but Suo Jia wouldn't stupidly buy anything like he'd bought the Xiangshui rice. No matter what, the profits that food had were too low. True merchants would never sell foodstuff.

Icebound's area was a place that always had good alcohol, especially distilled spirits. Its goods were so welcomed that its massive profits couldn't even be measured. But although Suo Jia knew he was supposed to ship the distilled spirits for business to get tons of money, where was he supposed to get the distilled

spirits from?

After Suo Jia paid another 1000 coins, he finally found the location the Blazing Liquor was located—Prairie Fire City. Although going from Tide City to Prairie Fire City and then to Icebound City would require going in a huge arc rather than a straight line, Suo Jia still firmly made his decision to do so.

Once Suo Jia had pretty much cleared out all the items within his interspatial rings and placed them within a bank safe house in Tide City, Suo Jia put on the ten interspatial rings and then filled them all with Xiangshui rice. He then rushed towards Prairie Fire City.

Chapter 321 – Encountering Robbers Pt. 2

Prairie Fire City was the origin of the alcohol. It didn't only produce Blazing Liquor, but sweet rice wines as well, the world famous liquor made from Xiangshui rice. Although Suo Jia was delivering 200 bags of Xiangshui rice, this didn't give Suo Jia too great of a profit. However, it wasn't as bad as running around empty-handed, and they were easy to sell.

Suo Jia left Tide City with all the goods, heading full speed towards Prairie Fire City. Throughout the entire journey, Suo Jia tried to avoid as many fights as he possibly could. Even if he did encounter a fight, his goal was to run away quickly, and not to get wrapped into it. He definitely didn't try to eliminate all the magical beasts present.

Originally, avoiding fights like this should've been difficult with Suo Jia's current actions. But fortunately, Suo Jia had the Diamond Dragon with its extremely powerful defense. Every time a fight was encountered, Suo Jia would let the Diamond Dragon loose to hold the magical beasts back while Suo Jia would flee by himself.

Although this trick seemed pretty difficult, it was actually very simple. Those magical beasts that had such powerful attacks were normally slower in speed, so Suo Jia could easily leave them behind, and even avoid them ahead of time. Those that were faster had lower attack power that couldn't break the Diamond Dragon's Glacial Armor. Throughout the whole journey, Suo Jia was able to progress with incomparable speed.

Of course, traveling like this through day and night wasn't something that Suo Jia's endurance could keep up with. Fortunately...although Suo Jia didn't dare to eat Magic of Spirit Potions, he was forced to temporarily lift his ban on eating Endurance Potions.

Suo Jia relied on the support of these Endurance Potions throughout the entire journey so that he could race forwards at high speed. When his energy really reached its limit, he'd sit down and meditate deeply and profoundly. At the same time, he'd be able to quickly recover his magic power and spirit power. Like this, Suo Jia was able to charge forwards for 15 hours nearly every day.

However, walking at night meant encountering demons was inevitable. Although Suo Jia could easily escape the encirclements of magical beasts, Suo Jia finally met with an inescapable fight, right when Prairie Fire City was within his sights.

A magical beast's IQ was extremely limited. Normally, it didn't understand anything like battle tactics; as long as the Diamond Dragon drew its attention just for a bit, it'd completely forget Suo Jia and allow him to quickly flee the fight. But this mistake was something humans would never make!

After traveling for an entire day, Suo Jia finally found a safe area to put up his tent and begin meditating. However, soon afterwards, the Diamond Dragon keeping guard outside suddenly let out an fretful cry.

Suo Jia abruptly opened his eyes. He knew that something had definitely happened outside. Nobody dared to be careless on the Greater Trade Routes; any kind of disorganization or lack of caution would be enough to lose one's life.

Not daring to waste any time, Suo Jia hurriedly aroused from his meditation. Although he hadn't meditated for long, Suo Jia had only been running the whole journey, and hadn't consumed much magic power or spirit power. His only problem was his endurance, but he could use his Endurance Potions to replenish that. No matter what kind of enemy he encountered, Suo Jia would have to power to face the other party.

Anybody on the Greater Trade Routes had to be prepared to battle at any time. Nobody dared to ever let themselves fall into a

drained state. Otherwise, if a battle just broke out unexpectedly, one would die an extremely horrible death. One had to constantly maintain their peak condition, something that the adventurers on the Routes would always consider.

Suo Jia opened his tent flap to see six tall and large figures standing before him. Suo Jia concentrated on these figures; judging from the emblems they wore, Suo Jia could ascertain that since leaving the relay station, Suo Jia had encountered an adventurer group for the first time!

Suo Jia activated Spirit's Eye and seriously surveyed the other party. Of the other party's Life Protection strips, four were green and two were red. The four people with green energy levels were all warriors, while the two with red energy levels were a fire elemental mage and a wind elemental thief!

Suo Jia didn't dare tarry under such circumstances where he knew nothing about his enemy. He quickly raised Water God's Shield. At the same time, Suo Jia hid the Diamond Dragon behind him. If anything went wrong, the Diamond Dragon would quickly transform, summon its Glacial Armor, and enter the battle.

Seeing that Suo Jia was alone, and the fact that his emblem indicated that he was a leader of a merchant group, the opposing six people smiled evilly. They knew that as long as they got rid of Suo Jia, all the goods he was carrying would become theirs.

After seeing the 10 interspatial rings on Suo Jia's fingers, especially the peak grade ring, these guys could tell that there were definitely many treasures stored within. Besides...even if the rings were empty, these 10 interspatial rings alone were enough to make them drool.

Under the pressure of numbers, as well as being at such close distance, the group of four warriors, one thief, and one mage could easily kill a single mage without question. No matter how powerful Suo Jia was, there was no way he'd be able to escape.

Seeing the four warriors pull out their weapons with dark grins on their faces, the wind elemental thief concealing his body in the air, and the fire mage raise his staff, Suo Jia knew that this was battle was unavoidable.

Suo Jia said in a low voice, “Diamond Dragon, hurry up and go out. This battle...is one we can’t run away from!”

Hearing Suo Jia’s words, the Diamond Dragon that had been hiding behind Suo Jia the whole time suddenly flapped its wings, and its body leapt up from the ground like an arrow above Suo Jia’s head. At the same time, layers of Glacial Armor appeared one after another on the Diamond Dragon’s body. While this was happening, Suo Jia’s figure slowly vanished in the air.

“Huh?” The four warriors that had quickly rushed forwards to surround Suo Jia all stared at the place he’d disappeared from in confusion. It couldn’t be that...the guy was a thief, and not a mage?

Before the enemy could make sense of the situation, the Diamond Dragon had already fallen from the air and smashed down onto the ground with incomparably imposing force. At the same time, the fire elemental mage raised his staff, and a scarlet cloud of fire suddenly materialized above the Diamond Dragon as fireballs the size of soccer balls began to descend from the fiery cloud one after another.

The Diamond Dragon raised its head to look at the cloud and the corners of its mouth twitched in contempt. This was to be expected...even idiots knew that the water element suppressed the fire element. The Diamond Dragon’s favorite opponents were those with the fire element. Any such opponents would end up decimated miserably in front of the Diamond Dragon.

No matter how hot the flames were, melting a huge chunk of ice 10 meters in diameter wasn’t something that could be achieved in only 8-10 minutes. Before an ice elemental creature, the might of

fire magic was at its lowest point.

Seeing the soccer ball-sized fireballs disappear on the Diamond Dragon's body one after another, the fire elemental mage's expression couldn't help but freeze. This kind of result really made him lose face. However...if he knew the Diamond Dragon's identity, he probably wouldn't be so depressed. Immunity to fire was a Diamond Dragon's greatest trait.

While the fire mage was sulking, a sudden bone-piercing chill made him utter a few jumbled cries. He looked around in shock to see that a pale blue mist had at some point materialized around him.

"Hu..."With a powerful shriek, the fire Magister watched with wide eyes as hundreds of ice blades all flew explosively at him from the same point...wildly slicing at his body.

"Ice Roar!" The fire mage couldn't help but shout in fear. Everyone knew that the Ice Roar was a Great Mage's trademark skill, as well as the ice mage's most powerful small ranged attack. Its extreme attack power could easily destroy any defense. Although the fire mage had five companions by his side, he couldn't feel any trace of security while facing the Ice Roar. In fact, it was the complete opposite; the thought of certain death quickly arose in his mind.

Chapter 322 – Power Displayed By The Explosive Dragon Pt. 1

The Ice Roar was a peak grade magic that actually combined three major magics: Revolving Frozen Gas, Violent Ice Blade Surge, and Rotating Flow Technique. It had vast amounts of attack power. The only regrettable part was that its attack range was a bit lacking; it could only surround a circular area of 10 square meters.

The chilly Revolving Frozen Gas carried hundreds of sharp, shrieking ice blades whirling around in the direction of Rotating Flow Technique. If the blades did not cut any physical objects, they would continue spinning around within the 10 meter perimeter for 3 seconds before exhausting their energies and scattering.

Although the time seemed short, these 3 seconds were enough for all the frenzily dancing ice blades to circle around the magic's range 10 times. Moreover...all the ice blades overlapped and waved together to form a giant net. Nobody could completely dodge the slices of these revolving blades.

Although he was a Magister, ice trumped fire. Before ice, flames would pretty much be extinguished at a single touch. Although fire magic's flames were fiercer and more tenacious than normal flames, Suo Jia's Ice Roar wasn't ordinary ice either. It contained tons of cold air, to the point where it seemed unimaginable.

Under his companions' shocked gazes, the dozens of ice blades whizzing around in the air went in a slight loop and then easily broke the opposing fire mage's Blaze Shield. The next instant...Suo Jia used his Spirit Eye to watch as the fire mage's Life Protection strip decreased as if a flood was charging out of it. After the Ice Roar had finally stopped its destruction, the fire elemental Magister only had a very slight bit of energy remaining in his Life Protection.

Having resisted against Suo Jia's Ice Roar with great difficulty,

the fire user couldn't help but let loose a sigh of relief. However... before he'd even finished his sigh, a piercing, blue glow instantly flashed across the 20 meter space and sharply blasted into his body.

The blue light flashed fiercely, and both it and the fire Magister's Life Protection simultaneously burst into blue rays that filled the sky. Seeing this, the fire user realized that if he hadn't taken advantage of the gap in time the activation of the second Mysterious Ice Arrow had created to erect his Vulcan's Shield, he would've definitely died today!

The fire Magister quickly raised the staff in his hand, prepared to activate the Blazing Shield. Yet...the action that was normally very easy to execute now seemed to be much slower and much harder to perform!

"I was frozen!" The fire mage gave an astonished stare at the right hand he was slowly lifting, and he inwardly let out a devastated cry. He clearly knew that the Ice Roar from just now, as well as the Mysterious Ice Arrow, had already forced him to enter a frozen state, making his actions incomparably slow. Seeing this, the fire user couldn't help but feel despair.

Suo Jia didn't let the fire user despair for too long. Pretty much following right after the blue glow, the fire Magister's throat was instantly pierced. The fire Magister had only gotten the chance to raise his staff halfway before he fell with shock and fear written all over his face. The instant his large head came into contact with the ground, it smashed into pieces that scattered all over the grounds. Everyone knew that the fire Magister's fatal casualty hadn't been just the arrow through the throat, but the cold air that the arrow brought with it. This had instantly already frozen the fire Magister's head into an ice cube.

As the fire Magister's corpse hit the ground, Suo Jia's figure suddenly appeared on the Diamond Dragon's right shoulder. He coldly stared at the corpse without any trace of pity. Since they'd

already decided to become his enemy, the only thing Suo Jia could do was to concentrate all his effort into getting rid of them. There was nothing else to be discussed about the matter.

The battle had just started, yet they'd already lost such an important companion. The four warriors couldn't help but grow furious. The only reason they'd been able to run around freely on the Trade Routes was precisely because of this fire Magister's existence. Although fire magic could be restrained by ice magic, it was without a question that fire magic had the most powerful destructive ability among the four elemental magics. It was pretty much irreplaceable in terms of its ability to weaken the Life Protections of wild beasts!

The might of fire elemental magic was in its large range and intense tyrannic ability. Fire magic was in a frightening realm with respect to these two aspects. This fire Magister that had died by Suo Jia's hands had an AoE magic attack that could contain all life forms within a 50 meter perimeter. In addition to the protection offered by the four warriors, the Magister pretty much stood at an invincible position. But nobody had imagined that as soon as the fight had started, the Magister would be killed by Suo Jia.

This thief group had been in the Greater Trade Routes for several years already. This whole time, their ability to survive wandering around within the first and second checkpoints was because of that fire Magister's existence. Whenever they encountered a magical beast, the fire mage alone, under the protection of the four warriors, would be able to simultaneously attack hundreds of magical beasts.

His powerful destructive ability and superior large-range attacks made the fire Magister the magical beast killer. No matter how terrifying the beasts' numbers were, he could always use up their Life Protections within a short period of time, and then burn them into ash.

Right now, having suddenly lost such a major support, it'd be

stranger if the four warriors didn't lose their cool. Losing this most powerful companion meant that they were already unable to roam around the Greater Trade Routes any further. The four warriors alone were nowhere near suitable opponents to go up against the flood of magical beasts. Thus...Suo Jia had already become their arch nemesis. Only one side could survive the ordeal!

“Instant Kill!” Just as Suo Jia was focused on watching the four warriors quickly approach, a chilled voice rang from behind him. At the same time, that hidden thief suddenly appeared behind Suo Jia like a ghost, and the dagger in their hand came piercing towards Suo Jia's heart.

This extremely fast speed made Suo Jia's expression change to one of shock. Although he had the Water God's Shield, as well as Life Protection, Suo Jia knew that thieves were frightening because they had the unique trait of being able to ignore all defenses!

Once the attack reached a certain speed, the Energy Shield and Life Protection energy were unable to be replenished fast enough, so the dagger could use its swift movements to pierce through the Water God's Shield and Life Protection, injuring Suo Jia's heart. At this point, any powerful defense would seem extremely weak.

Previous tests showed that, under normal circumstances, normal glass wasn't as sturdy as asphalt. If one used a glass dagger to try to pierce the asphalt, the glass dagger would shatter immediately.

However, if the dagger was brought to the 20th floor of a tall building and allowed to freely drop, the glass dagger would be able to deeply embed itself into the asphalt ground with the addition of gravity's acceleration.

Now, Suo Jia's defense was like that asphalt surface. The thief's dagger was like that glass blade. Although under normal circumstances, it couldn't pierce through the Magic Shield and the Life Protection, after having reached a certain speed, nothing

could block Instant Kill!

Everyone watched as the dagger neared Suo Jia's back, inch by inch. In a mere instant, the dagger had already entered a 10 centimeter range from Suo Jia's body. In that instant, a delighted expression of triumph couldn't help but form on the thief's face!

Chapter 323 – Power Displayed By The Explosive Dragon Pt. 2

The thief's smile was very sweet, but he wasn't the only one smiling. His companions were also smiling, and Suo Jia was as well. However, everyone's reasons for smiling were different.

Suo Jia would never make such a low-level mistake. The instant that thief had hid himself, he'd become Suo Jia's greatest enemy. Suo Jia, who was using the Water God's Shield and Life Protection, wasn't actually afraid of the four warriors. Aside from the fire mage, the only person that Suo Jia could feel threatened by was that thief. The current reality only confirmed that Suo Jia's judgment had been correct.

It looked like this attack was about to succeed, but the next moment...a devastating hurricane frenzily engulfed the area around Suo Jia. At the same time the thief's dagger finally pierced the Water God's Shield, rows and columns of diamond-like icicles wildly flew out and dispersed from Suo Jia.

If the dagger had gone deeper by just a few more centimeters, Suo Jia definitely would've died. This was something that the thief understood very clearly. However, that difference of a few centimeters was something he'd never be able to cover. Following the explosive charge of the diamond-like icicles, the thief was helplessly sent flying backwards.

Three Mysterious Ice Arrows were activated in succession. The first two broke through the thief's Life Protection, while the final one sharply shot through the thief's body. At the same time, the thief's body finally fell to the ground from the Diamond Charge's push.

"Clang!" A clear ring could be heard as the thief's body crashed down, smashing into pieces that scattered over the ground like he'd turned into a vase. Remnant pieces of his corpse were all over

the area.

Seeing their two companions be killed so miserably by Suo Jia, who seemed to just be playing around, the four warriors began to feel regret for the first time. They regretted having provoked this fellow with an unknown background for no reason. How was Suo Jia a human, he was clearly a demon king!

However, although Suo Jia was very terrifying, the four warriors didn't actually shrink back. In their eyes, the victory of this competition was definitely theirs. That was because...they'd finally successfully arrived within 10 meters of Suo Jia's body.

Seeing the four malicious glares from the warriors, Suo Jia couldn't help but chuckle and gently put his hand down. At this point, Suo Jia understood that continuing to rely on magic alone would no longer work.

At such close range, activating Ice Roar would mean that Suo Jia and the Diamond Dragon would also be within the attack range. If he removed himself from the attack range, the four warriors could still cover the ten meter distance and appear next to Suo Jia in the blink of an eye, making the Ice Roar a waste without question.

As for the Mysterious Ice Arrow, it was now useless as well. Suo Jia made some calculations; the four warriors all had green Life Protections, so 12 arrows in succession were required to wear down one warrior's Life Protection. In this time, Suo Jia would've been killed over multiple times.

Everyone knew that in close combat, a warrior was entirely able to go up against magic head-on and attack a mage. Under the berserk attacks of a warrior, the one to fall first would definitely be the mage, and not the warrior!

The regrettable part of close combat was that the mage was always the one that suffered. Once a warrior neared a mage, that basically signified the coming of defeat. In a close range confrontation between a warrior and a mage, victory always

belonged to the warrior.

However, would Suo Jia surrender so easily? No...of course not. Suo Jia had already realized his weakness when he still young. After all these years, he'd also used all his efforts to overcome the disadvantages he had. Although the ten meter range was the warrior's territory, it was also Suo Jia's!

He spread his hands, and immediately...a long ice stream appeared and spun around Suo Jia like a nimble snake. This time... Suo Jia didn't compress the ice stream. The thigh-thick and 20 meter long ice stream slowly wrapped itself around the 6 meter tall Diamond Dragon, closely protecting Suo Jia and the Diamond Dragon within it.

Suo Jia's hand danced, and the next instant...the ice stream around Suo Jia and the Diamond Dragon suddenly leapt towards the opposite four warriors like a serpent leaving its pit.

Faced against the ice stream's brazen confrontation, the four warriors all brandished the weapons in their hands and moved to welcome the ice stream. At the same time, the Diamond Dragon didn't stay idle, and abruptly opened its large mouth, blowing out breaths of Ice Seal.

"Snap...snap..." Following the Diamond Dragon's icy breath, two warriors were instantly sealed within ice. At the same time, a warrior hacked down onto the ice stream, and under Suo Jia's Freezing Touch, was also successfully turned into an ice cube! Only one warrior remained. He'd broken the ice stream with a single chop, and was now charging at Suo Jia.

After feeling that violent blade, Suo Jia was able to immediately conclude that this guy's wild slash was even more explosive than the Crimson Bear's. With the current hardness of the Diamond Dragon's Glacial Armor, it would be unable to endure successive bursts of attacks from the opposite party. Once they neared, the Diamond Dragon would most likely have its Glacial Armor broken

through in an instant, and lose its combat ability.

Suo Jia couldn't help but smirk at the quickly charging over warrior, as well as the three companions swiftly breaking out of the ice. He spread his hands apart once more, and the long ice stream quickly spiraled around and blocked off the other three warriors. At the same time, Suo Jia used telepathy to give the Diamond Dragon instructions!

While Suo Jia successfully blocked off the other three warriors temporarily, the Diamond Dragon first used Ice Dragon's Breath to seal the charging warrior into ice, and then...before the warrior could break out of the ice, the Diamond Dragon abruptly spun around. Using the resulting centrifugal force, its enormous, 10 meter long ice tail whizzed down with a bang at the warrior's body currently sealed in Mysterious Ice.

"Crack..." Clear rings echoed out as the ice cube sealing the warrior immediately shattered from the contracted dragon's tail. At the same time, the Life Protection around the warrior within the Mysterious Ice rapidly went down two levels from green to orange!

Seeing this, Suo Jia's eyes couldn't help but light up. He knew that the Diamond Dragon's tail whip was absolutely not something with very large destructive ability. The reason it had caused so much damage was because the warrior had first been sealed by ice, and then the surrounding ice had been fiercely smashed with a whip, thus producing this manyfold greater damage.

Basically, if the opponent sealed was just the slightest bit weaker, that Diamond Dragon's tail would definitely have shattered the body into tiny pieces. Having only dropped by two Life Protection levels meant that this fellow was already very powerful.

However, although they'd successfully damaged that warrior, the Diamond Dragon and Suo Jia were still in danger. Because the Diamond Dragon had lashed out with a spin, the Diamond

Dragon's back was facing the warrior that had now broken out of the ice. Seeing this, the warrior naturally couldn't let this chance slip by. Without paying any mind to the pain his body was in, he abruptly raised the war blade in his hand and slashed down at the Diamond Dragon's back.

If this strike hit, the Diamond Dragon's following condition would be hard to predict. Although the Diamond Dragon wouldn't be killed just like that, it was very possible that it would lose its ability to fight. This was something that Suo Jia definitely couldn't allow to happen.

Of course, Suo Jia had naturally arranged this for his own reasons. Without any hard diamond, Suo Jia definitely wouldn't monopolize his porcelain work. The instant the warrior's war blade had just been raised above its head, Suo Jia quickly withdrew his control of the ice stream. With a wave of his right hand, a flash of blue light shot into the warrior's arm.

The warrior's movements couldn't help shake for a moment. As a result of this attack, the force of his slash fell a bit. However, this alone wasn't enough for the Diamond Dragon to break away from the danger zone.

With a crazy roar, the warrior gathered all his remaining strength and hacked down towards the Diamond Dragon. At this moment, Suo Jia unexpectedly gave a dark chuckle, and stretched his hands towards the warrior. Water Manipulation was activated at full force!

Following Suo Jia's actions, the warrior could only feel the energy within himself forcibly drag his limbs out in the opposite direction. In that instant, he suspected that his body was no longer his, as it wouldn't obey any of his commands.

Despite this, the warrior still refused to give up. Although his body was being manipulated, his battle qi was still under his control. Fiercely gritting his teeth, the warrior was still able to

chop down with all his strength.

“Snap...” A loud sound could be heard as fragments of ice flew off from the Diamond Dragon’s back. However...with the addition of Suo Jia’s ice arrow, the might of water manipulation, as well as the slowed effects of freezing, the power of this attack was no longer enough to defeat the Diamond Dragon!

The powerful rebound force miserably sent the warrior back a few steps. At the same time, the Diamond Dragon finally turned around. Its large mouth opened, and the warrior was once again sealed on the spot.

This Ice Seal that looked just like a bunch of water spat out of the Diamond Dragon’s mouth instantly shackled the 2 meter tall warrior to the ground. The transparent and sturdy ice completely covered his body. This was the Diamond Dragon’s normal attack: Ice Dragon’s Breath!

Although the power had dropped by a lot already, the warrior’s blade had still successfully infuriated the Diamond Dragon. Seeing the sealed fellow before it, the Diamond Dragon’s body swayed to the side, and lifted those large legs as thick as several people put together, and with all its strength, stomped down towards the firmly sealed warrior.

Seeing the large foot descending from the heavens, the warrior strongly desired to break through the ice and flee. However, if he wanted to break the Glacial Armor right after the attack he’d completed earlier, he had to re-gather his battle qi. There was no way the Diamond Dragon would give him this chance.

“Crunch...” The Diamond Dragon fiercely stamped its foot down onto the ice cube. This violent attack caused the warrior’s ice cube to instantly shatter. At the same time, the Life Protection around the warrior’s body immediately turned blank, and blood came spurting out of his mouth.

Before the Diamond Dragon’s ice attacks had even stopped, it

suddenly exerted strength. Using its brute force and heavy body weight, its large foot suddenly broke through all resistance, like a metal compressor, and firmly stomped onto the ground. The ghastly sight of violet-red blood splashed around in all directions from underneath the Diamond Dragon's foot...

Chapter 324 – Powerful Evolution Pt. 1

After seeing yet another companion die in Suo Jia's hands, the other three warriors grew even more crazed. They all raised the war blades in their hand, roaring loudly as they charged at Suo Jia and the Diamond Dragon.

Suo Jia looked at the remaining three warriors in disdain and lightly clapped his hands together. Immediately...the ice stream that had originally gone limp on the ground from lack of control began to wriggle once more, wrapping itself around the three warriors.

Faced again the ice stream suddenly bursting towards them, the three warriors had absolutely no time to evade. After all...the ice stream was just below their feet. In just an instant, Suo Jia had successfully used the ice stream to bind a warrior. He then used Freezing Touch to freeze another warrior into an ice cube!

Although the ice stream's entrapment and Freezing Touch were fine, these could only limit the enemy's movements for around 3 seconds. But to Suo Jia, this little amount of time was already enough!

However, one couldn't forget that there were still three warriors remaining. While two of them were being frozen once more, the last warrior had suddenly leapt up into the air and brandished the weapon in his hand as he slashed explosively towards Suo Jia, who was standing on the shoulder of the six meter tall Diamond Dragon.

Because the Diamond Dragon was 6 meters tall...Suo Jia was currently standing at a height equivalent to that of a two-story building's roof. To his right was the Diamond Dragon's slender neck and large head. Although Suo Jia's height was already around 170cm, he seemed so tiny when standing on the dragon.

The blue cloak Suo Jia wore fluttered in the cold wind. He faced

the last, explosive warrior without a single trace of fear. He didn't make any move to counter or block either.

Seeing his own war blade nearing Suo Jia, the warrior's gaze couldn't help but flash red. He had already decided that as long as he touched Suo Jia, he'd immediately activate Lotus Flower Slash. Even if Suo Jia was a Great Magister, he'd die on the spot. The Lotus Flower Slash could frenzily attack over 30 times within only 3 seconds. No matter how powerful one's Life Protection was, they'd still inevitably meet a violent death.

Of course, the Lotus Flower Slash wasn't unrivaled. It could be broken through or evaded, and maybe even resisted. However...a warrior wouldn't ever believe that at such close range, a mage would be able to go up against an Advanced Warrior's activated Lotus Flower Slash!

As he thought this, the war blade in his hand had finally reached 10 centimeters from Suo Jia's body. With a cruel smirk, the warrior burst out in roar, and his battle qi came pouring outwards. The war blade flashed red, and the Lotus Flower Slash gushed outwards as well.

"Hiyah!" He clearly saw that his war blade had already touched Suo Jia's magic shield. However, the next instant, the warrior suddenly cried out in shock as his body suddenly felt pain. He was astonished to discover that his body had actually gotten further from Suo Jia!

Had Suo Jia retreated? No...of course not. Putting aside the fact that Suo Jia didn't have that kind of evasion ability, Suo Jia wouldn't have only dodged now if he could. He hadn't reached that high of a realm yet.

Suo Jia smiled at the dumbstruck expression on the warrior's face and said, "You only saw me standing there. But did you ever think about where I was standing?"

Rewind to a second before...

Seeing the human completely ignore its existence and charge with all they had towards its left shoulder, the Diamond Dragon was finally enraged. What was this? Was it just some decoration? In its fury, the Diamond Dragon had suddenly stretched out its neck, its gaping mouth opening wide to bite the warrior. This was also why the warrior couldn't approach Suo Jia. His body was currently in the dragon's mouth; how could he possibly advance?

"Crunch...crunch....crunch..." Suo Jia watched as the Diamond Dragon's large mouth began to chew. The fierce crunches resounded out as the warrior's miserable cries could be heard from within the dragon's mouth each time it chewed. At the same time, a section of his Life Protection energy strip instantly disappeared!

Green, yellow, orange, red, clear...after chewing four times in a row, the Diamond Dragon successfully consumed the warrior's Life Protection. Then...with a vicious bite, crimson blood immediately shot out. The sound of blood could be heard as it flowed down the Diamond Dragon's body, quickly dripping onto the ground. Before it trickled very far, it was pitifully frozen into ice.

When one looked over at the Diamond Dragon's large mouth... one would see that a thick, blood-red and dark reddish-purple colored liquid covered its mouth. As the Diamond Dragon continued to chew, the poor warrior's bones were instantly ground into powder. Flesh, bone, and organs all fell down from both sides of the dragon's mouth.

Seeing this scene, the other two that had just escaped from the ice stream and Ice Seal were completely stunned, their bodies shaking as they stared the dragon's constantly moving jaw. The two guys finally let out strangled howls and turned around to flee.

Suo Jia smirked darkly as he watched the two people quickly running off into the distance. Since they'd already become his enemy, Suo Jia definitely wouldn't spare them. Otherwise, they could go and secretly plan an attack in the future. By then, no

matter how powerful he was, it wouldn't be a comfortable situation to be in.

Suo Jia commanded the Diamond Dragon through telepathy. After receiving the order, the Diamond Dragon's thick and sturdy lower limbs suddenly bent, and then it shot up like a spring. The powerful force allowed the dragon's body to burst into the air.

"Whoosh..." With a fierce shriek, the dragon suddenly opened its pair of diamond wings in midair, and with powerful strokes of its wings, it chased after the two warriors from above.

No matter how quickly the warriors ran, their speed couldn't possibly compare to that of flight. In a mere instant, the Diamond Dragon had shot forwards like a bullet and arrived right above the warriors. Seeing this, Suo Jia pushed his feet down on the dragon's body and activated Unrivaled Wave Walking. While Suo Jia's body was suspended strangely in midair, the Diamond Dragon retracted its wings slightly and shot back down to smash into the ground.

The six meter tall and extremely thick and solid Diamond Dragon probably weighed tons. In addition to the impulse generated by the fact that it had just flown down at high speed, its body whizzed down to crush the warriors like an artillery shell.

Hearing the descending noise, the warriors turned around in confusion to look up at the sky as they ran. Immediately...the Diamond Dragon's massive body appeared within their line of vision.

"Bang!" Just as the warriors intended to dodge, their visions suddenly turned black as the Diamond Dragon's thick legs even thicker than pillars, as well as its feet about the size of small cars, crashed onto their bodies with a violent boom. There was a warrior underneath each foot; neither had escaped.

From midair, Suo Jia stared in astonishment at the two warriors on the floor. Using the Spirit's Eye, Suo Jia had clearly discovered that this single stamp had instantly crushed both these warriors'

Life Protections. Before even getting a chance to cry out miserably, they'd already lost their lives.

Suo Jia looked at the Diamond Dragon in admiration. He'd never thought that aside from having an overpowered defense, the pet would also possess such domineering physical strength. This was really too extreme!

First was the sweeping strike from the dragon's tail, then the trampling with its large feet, then using its mouth to chew, before finally smashing down at high speed from the air. The might of its physical power kept getting greater and greater, and increasingly more extreme!

Suo Jia knew that these definitely weren't all the dragon's attack methods. At the very least, it still hadn't used its sturdy and powerful claws yet. Looking at its front claws as thick as thick as an elephant's legs, Suo Jia believed that the power they contained definitely surpassed a terrifying level.

Suo Jia stared at the Diamond Dragon in astonishment. He knew that it relied on its unequaled Glacial Armor as defense, its extremely low temperature ice magic attacks as supplement, while its real attacks relied on its body's physical force!

Ice magic was just like that. It really focused on control. It lowered one's speed, weakened one's attack and defense, but it had difficulty actually killing. Of course...instances where there were differences in strength weren't factored in.

"Roar!" A heaven-shaking dragon's cry burst out after it had descended. The giant Diamond Dragon suddenly looked down at the enemy before raising its head up high and opening its mouth up to the sky. With its wings spread wide open, it roared wildly. At the same time, an intense, blue light began to emanate from its body.

"This...this is!" Suo Jia couldn't help but grow concerned about the Diamond Dragon's strange changes. He didn't understand,

what exactly was going on with it? Why was it like this?

Chapter 325 – Powerful Evolution Pt. 2

As Suo Jia was wondering, the surface of the alighted Diamond Dragon's body flashed blue. Layer after layer of scale-like veined patterns appeared in succession.

Before, the Diamond Dragon was like a large ice sculpture. Its entire body was transparent, and was made of large chunks of ice piled together. Its surface was extremely smooth, and had clear edges.

But it was different now. After the intense changes, the sharp edges of the Diamond Dragon's body had become rounded and smooth. Its outer appearance no longer seemed like a rectangular ice cube, but rather, there were now lines that carved out the shape of robust muscles.

That wasn't all. The muscle-like ice cubes were quickly covered on the outside by a pale blue layer of Glacial Armor. However, while the blue color was very, very light, it could still clearly be seen.

Suo Jia dropped his jaw in delight at the Diamond Dragon that now looked as if it had been made from blue crystal. Although he didn't know what exactly had happened, the Diamond Dragon had undoubtedly evolved!

During the Diamond Dragon's thousand year long maturation period, it would evolve countless times as it continued to battle and absorb more experience. Each time it evolved, the Diamond Dragon's battle power would increase to a new stage!

Suo Jia looked at the smooth body, flourishing muscles, the entire body of blue scales, and the overall extremely elegant appearance of the Diamond Dragon. In his excitement, he stepped forwards and his body quickly landed on the Diamond Dragon's shoulder.

“Eh!” As Suo Jia neared the dragon, he was astounded as he discovered that the Diamond Dragon’s head seemed to have increased as well, going from 6 meters to a ridiculous 9 meters. It was now the height of a three-story building, and while its body had become quite a bit thicker and more solid, it had also become more healthy-looking as its height had increased. When Suo Jia saw the Diamond Dragon’s bus-sized head, as well as the three meter sharp, human-thick horns coming out at a 45 degree angle from the back of its head, he knew that the dragon had definitely gained another method of attack.

As Suo Jia was thinking this, the Diamond Dragon’s body suddenly sprung into action. With a fierce, resounding noise, the Diamond Dragon spread its thick legs apart and began to walk forwards.

“Aiya!” Suo Jia hadn’t thought that Diamond Dragon would suddenly begin moving, and hadn’t prepared himself. His foot slipped, and his body miserably fell off the Diamond Dragon’s shoulder.

Fortunately, he hadn’t fallen far before his body stopped as the Diamond Dragon reached out its left claw to catch him. With a bitter smile, Suo Jia sat up from the center of the claw, and looked at the new sight of his surroundings that were quickly passing by him on either side, feeling an indescribable delight.

The Diamond Dragon’s pace wasn’t actually very fast but...with the Diamond Dragon’s physique, its every step was larger than more than a dozen of Suo Jia’s, and its speed wasn’t exactly slow either. Rather, it was at least two times faster.

Why didn’t the Diamond Dragon just fly? Wasn’t that even faster? Actually, the Diamond Dragon still couldn’t fly at the moment. It could only use its jumping strength to leap up and then glide for a hundred meters or so. Moreover, this was a very unstable action, and it also consumed a lot of energy. Flying 2-3 times in succession would probably be able to completely drain the

Diamond Dragon's energy.

Of course, its inability to fly was only temporary. After continuous evolutions, there would eventually come a day where it can fly again. Although the Diamond Dragon wasn't a creature that could fly particularly fast, it flew in the strangest way. It was like a fish in midair; at high speed, it could instantly make 180 degree turns. Moreover, its speed wouldn't decrease.

Nobody knew exactly how much longer it would be until it could fly. It could be after one year, 10 years, or even 100 years. But... there was one thing that could be said for certain; once the Diamond Dragon passed its thousand year long period and entered the mature period, it would definitely be able to fly.

The Diamond Dragon's left claw suddenly began to move as it supported Suo Jia and moved him near its bus-sized head. It then lightly placed Suo Jia in between its three meter horns.

As the Diamond Dragon began to slowly leave, Suo Jia's foot slipped again. If he hadn't quickly used his arms to hug the arched back horns, Suo Jia definitely would've fallen down once more. After all...the Diamond Dragon's Glacial Armor was too slippery.

Suo Jia was bitterly smiling as he hugged the slippery horns that were so thick they were hard to hold. He felt like some trash hanging from the horn. After a moment, Suo Jia couldn't but shout loudly, "Oi! Little pet...are you trying to overturn the heavens? You dare to treat me like this!"

Hearing Suo Jia's words, the Diamond Dragon felt wronged and opened its mouth. The next moment...the part between its horns suddenly caved in to form a kind of open-air vehicle's pilot room.

Suo Jia couldn't help but feel exceptionally excited this. With a light tread of his feet, he baselessly fell into the caved in part and sat down in a throne-like ice chair. Only his upper body was still exposed to the outside.

“Yahoo!” With a joyous cry, Suo Jia flailed around in excitement. Sitting on top of the 9 meter tall dragon’s head between its arched back horns while looking at the land stretched in front of them made it seem cooler than any other open vehicle!

Sensing that Suo Jia had settled down in his seat, the Diamond Dragon finally relaxed. With a burst of strength from its legs, its walking pace increased from slow to fast, before turning into a run. Amidst fierce booming sounds, the Diamond Dragon slightly opened its wings as it traveled at a speed impossible to describe!

Suo Jia looked down at the Diamond Dragon in gratitude as he comfortably settled in his chair. If it were any other person, even if the dragon allowed them to, they wouldn’t be able to sit here. The cold air’s invasion from the Diamond Dragon’s Glacial Armor wasn’t something one could withstand for long periods of time.

But Suo Jia was different. After completing the Atlantis equipment set, resisting the cold was a minor matter; it was pretty much an immunity to water magic. Even if the water was at absolute zero, it couldn’t possibly harm Suo Jia.

Suo Jia leisurely say in the chair, but he didn’t relax for long. Instead, he quickly flipped out from his interspatial ring some books discussing the Diamond Dragon’s traits. He swiftly began to look through them; he wanted to know just exactly was going on with the Diamond Dragon’s evolution this time!

After flipping through the books for only a while, Suo Jia found the place that discussed its changes. First was those pale blue crystal-like scales that could improve the already amazing Diamond Dragon’s defense. At the same low temperature, this layer of scales would be able to boost the Diamond Dragon’s defense by around twofold. These dragon scales were called—Diamond Dragon Armor!

Aside from improving the Diamond Dragon’s defense, the Dragon Armor could also stop the cold air from spreading, which

meant that the Diamond Dragon could maintain its attack state for longer periods of time. That way, the combat state wouldn't just wear off halfway through a fight because a lot of the cold air had dispersed away.

Before today, the Diamond Dragon could only keep its battle state for around a dozen minutes. When this time limit passed, the Diamond Dragon couldn't continue holding its current appearance. But now, after possessing the Diamond Armor, the cold air's dispersion rate was drastically slowed. Currently speaking, maintaining this state for 20 minutes wasn't an issue.

Of course, this Diamond Dragon Armor was still in its elementary state. As the Diamond Dragon's strength increased, its defense would become better, and its ability to stop cold air from diffusing would improve as well. By the final phase, the Diamond Dragon would be able to permanently maintain this appearance.

As for the changes, these were all natural, and had nothing to do with abilities. The dragon had been constantly picking up things from its battles, and making endless alterations to perfect its results. The Diamond Dragon's fighting style was actually created by the Diamond Dragon condensing all the Mysterious Ice it could control. Any forms depended on its own decisions. When it believed its appearance was suitable, it would naturally transform into it.

After looking up the Diamond Dragon's changes, Suo Jia put away the history book and excitedly looked down at the Diamond Dragon. Suo Jia watched the dragon's large legs take large strides with its giant wings were open. This speed...was as fast as lightning!

When it encountered a magical beast's interception, the Diamond Dragon would run faster for a few steps before it would exert strength on its feet and send its body rocketing up first. After gliding over the 100 meter distance, it would land back on the ground and continue running. In the blink of an eye, the

intercepting magical beast would already disappear from Suo Jia's line of vision.

Finally...the 20 minutes passed very quickly. Right before it crumbled, the Diamond Dragon stopped and crawled along the ground, before cracks quickly spread across the body as it fell apart. The next moment...the Diamond Dragon cheerfully leapt out from the pile of ice cubes, excitedly jumping into Suo Jia's arms as it warmly licked Suo Jia's face with its tiny tongue.

Chapter 326 – Finally Awakening Pt. 1

After evolving, the Diamond Dragon's normal appearance had also changed. At the moment...while it was still only about the size of a pug or a large cat, and it was still chubby, it was no longer milky-white in color. Instead, it had changed into a translucent pale blue, like blue crystal.

If the Diamond Dragon adopted a pose and stood still, nobody would think that it was alive. Suo Jia believed that a work of art this unimaginably beautiful and refined would definitely be sellable for a good price. It was a pity...the little pet wasn't artwork. Even if it was, Suo Jia wouldn't be willing to sell it.

Its body color wasn't the only thing that had changed. Exquisite, fish-like scales on the Diamond Dragon's outer body reflected a brilliant blue light under the sun's rays.

Suo Jia pulled out the refined potions from his interspatial ring and tossed them without any hesitation into the dragon's mouth. It didn't hold back either, and after clamping down on the four colored potions with a snap, it happily swallowed them.

Suo Jia smiled at the Diamond Dragon and opened his interspatial ring, prepared to place the dragon inside. But the next moment, Suo Jia was shocked to discover that no matter how hard he tried, the dragon couldn't be put in!

It wasn't that the Diamond Dragon was unwilling to enter. Actually, it was being pretty cooperative, as it also wanted to go back early and sleep. However, both Suo Jia and the Diamond Dragon could clearly sense that a powerful resistance was pushing the dragon out of the ring, rejecting its entry.

Suo Jia stared doubtfully at the interspatial ring. But just then, he suddenly realized; although this interspatial ring could contain life forms, it would reject entry to a life form that had reached a certain level of strength!

Suo Jia stared at the Diamond Dragon and couldn't help but chuckle bitterly. Fortunately...the Diamond Dragon's normal state wasn't very large—about the size of a pug—meaning it was very light, only 1.5-2kg. This weight was completely negligible with Suo Jia's strength.

Of course, the little creature wouldn't need Suo Jia to carry it all the time. Under normal circumstances, the little pet would dance around Suo Jia in the air. Although it still couldn't fly for a long period of time in its combat state, flying was a natural instinct in its normal state.

They hadn't traveled for long before Prairie Fire Plains finally appeared ahead of them. When Suo Jia looked over at the distant city, he couldn't help but be overjoyed. After some calculations, he realized that that he'd run over 50km in the past 20 minutes. This speed...was crazy!

With the Diamond Dragon in his arms, Suo Jia entered the city as the sky was darkening. He randomly found an inn and the two of them were finally able to get a good rest.

The next morning, Suo Jia collected information around him and eventually found Prairie Fire City's largest, as well as its most famous, Blazing Liquor brewery. He first sold the 200 bags of Xiangshui rice, and earned at least 200,000 Trade Route coins.

Then, Suo Jia found the brewery's boss, a middle aged man with an extremely thick and solid body. He had a red nose and a large military stomach.

The boss looked at Suo Jia standing in front of him and asked in confusion, "Mister, I heard you're looking for me?"

"Yea..." Suo Jia nodded and firmly said, "I'm a merchant, as well as the person that just sold 200 bags of Xiangshui rice to your place!"

"Oh!" The brewery boss couldn't help but grow excited at this.

To think that a merchant had come to them, how could he let this business opportunity run away? Breweries relied on merchants to help them sell their wines.

Suo Jia saw the boss's excited expression and continued, "The reason I came here this time is actually to buy some Blazing Liquor and sell them in Icebound City. I hope that Boss thinks about the price a bit more. If the price is appropriate, I can help you sell the wines in bulk!"

Suo Jia feigned an expression of fury and said in a low voice, "People nowadays are becoming less and less sincere. You know, I want to some other breweries just now as well, but they all treated me as if I was brain-dead. With the prices they offered, they definitely treated me like I was an idiot."

"Hehe..." The brewery boss couldn't help but wipe his sweat and inwardly comment to on how dangerous the situation had been. If Suo Jia hadn't said those words, the boss definitely would've also asked for a sky-high price. Now, he obviously thought it over again. After all...this city wasn't the only one that could brew wine.

After some thought, the brewery boss cautiously asked, "Um, what kind of wine do you want? And how much?"

"Hm..." Suo Jia firmly replied, "It doesn't matter what type of wine it is, it just needs to be fiery. As for the amount, that depends on the price. If it's a lower price, then I'll want some more; if it's a higher price, then I'll want a bit less. If it's too high, I won't want it at all."

The brewery boss gritted his teeth as he thought this through carefully. He knew that the price couldn't be carelessly proposed. As soon as Suo Jia felt dissatisfied, he'd just leave. But if the offered price was too low, the brewery's business would be affected as well.

After pondering this for a long time, the brewery boss finally

made his decision. He abruptly raised his head and resolutely said to Suo Jia, “Our Blazing Brewery’s most popular alcohol is Blazing Liquor. As for the price, I’ll ask for 1000 coins per barrel. What do you think?”

“1000 coins!” Suo Jia couldn’t help but give a strange shout at the boss’s words. At the same time, his eyes locked onto the boss’s eyes. Whether the price was high or low could be discerned from his gaze.

The boss calmly stated, “This is the lowest price we can offer. If you’re still dissatisfied with this, then we can’t do anything about it.”

Suo Jia laughed and shook his head. “Boss, I don’t mean that all. I just hadn’t imagined that you’d give me such an advantageous price. Deal! I want the liquor, bring me to look at your goods!”

The brewery boss’s eyes couldn’t help but light up in excitement. Although the fee itself wasn’t high, and he couldn’t earn a lot of money from it, he’d still be able to profit if Suo Jia bought hundreds of barrels!

The brewery boss led Suo Jia into the strong of alcohol and casually opened a barrel. Immediately...the strong scent of liquor came flowing outwards. At the same time, the brewery boss took out a ladle and scooped some into a tiny bowl.

He passed the liquor over to Suo Jia and proudly declared, “Not to brag, but our brewery’s Blazing Liquor is the strongest alcohol. Moreover, the flavor is rich and mellow. If you don’t believe me, try a taste!”

After hearing the brewery boss’s claim, Suo Jia took a small, tentative sip. After lightly swallowing, immediately...a scorching feeling came from his mouth and down through his esophagus, quickly entering his stomach.

For a moment, Suo Jia could only sense his mouth, esophagus,

and stomach burn up. Despite this though, it wasn't painful; rather, it was a lazy, comfortable feeling. At the same time, a strong, sweet aroma circulated through his mouth and nose.

“Good liquor!” Suo Jia couldn't help but sigh as he looked at the fine alcohol in the bowl with delight. He'd only lightly pursed his lips to take a small sip, a few drops, yet he was feeling like this. How amazing would it be if he took a large gulp?

As he felt his entire body warm up, Suo Jia knew that he'd definitely made it big this time. If he shipped such good liquor over to Icebound City, he'd be able to sell it for a good price.

Suo Jia cautiously lifted his head and looked at the brewery boss, “That's right, Boss, you know how I want to ship these over to Icebound City and sell them there? Have...you sold your alcohol there before?”

“Haha...” The brewery boss shook his head with a bitter smile. “I wish, but you should know that there's at least 400km between here and Icebound City. There are multiple magical beasts along the way as well. Even if I wanted to ship them there, I can't!”

The brewery boss seemed to suddenly think of something as he continued, “Of course, there's some occasional adventurers that come here and buy some liquor to ship back to Icebound City, but they only buy 1-2 barrels, or even just buy it by bottle. That's why, while Icebound City definitely knows of Blazing Liquor, only a hundred or so people have probably actually drunk it.”

Suo Jia knew that these adventurers had definitely done so after receiving it as adventure missions, and couldn't have possibly shipped them in batch. Sending 1-2 barrels in one trip was already reaching the limit. This business was not only harmless, but actually advantageous. It was precisely because everyone had tasted this heavenly taste before that it was so lusted after.

Suo Jia continued to ask, “That's right, aside from here, what other places produce Blazing Liquor? I want to go ask...”

Before Suo Jia had finished speaking, the brewery boss interjected. “What are you thinking? The Blazing Liquor is our Blazing Brewery’s symbol and reputation. Aside from us, nobody else can brew it. Otherwise, on what basis would we be able to be the largest brewery?”

Suo Jia nodded in satisfaction and sized up the barrel. He then firmly stated, “Alright, in that case, give me 1000 barrels first. However...I still have another request!”

“1000 barrels!” The brewery boss gave a strange shout as he jumped up and stared at Suo Jia incredulously. Stuttering, he said, “Ok, ok, ok, go ahead and state whatever your request is!”

Chapter 327 – Finally Awakening Pt. 2

“Hehe...” With a dark smile, Suo Jia said in a low voice, “My request is that aside from me, nobody else is to sell this Blazing Liquor in Icebound City!”

The brewery boss replied without any hesitation, “Not a problem. As long as you really buy 1000 barrels, the selling rights within Icebound City and anywhere 50km from it belong to you!”

Suo Jia looked at the boss in astonishment. Originally, Suo Jia had thought it'd be hard to get the boss to agree; he hadn't imagined that the boss would accept the request so happily. However, after some thought, Suo Jia soon realized that even if the selling rights weren't granted to only Suo Jia, nobody else would sell the liquor there. In that case, there was absolutely no need for hesitation.

Suo Jia immediately pulled out his merchant card and completed the transaction with the brewery boss. He also signed the agreement to transferring the selling rights. After the 1000 barrels were stored into his interspatial rings, Suo Jia left the brewery. These barrels weren't that large, but wooden barrels about the size of trash cans. They were more like the size of large wine jugs.

Of course, Suo Jia didn't have enough money. 1000 barrels required a million coins. Suo Jia only had 800,000 at the moment. However, Prairie Fire City was a large city. With his merchant card, he overdrafted 200,000, perfectly meeting the card's overdraft limit.

Overdrafting was one of the major functions of the merchant card. However, it had to be paid back in full within a month. A single day overdue would mean Suo Jia would be unable to continue hanging around here. After losing trust, Suo Jia's qualifications as a merchant would automatically disappear. Losing his status was equivalent to losing citizenship in a country,

and he would no longer have the right to roam around the Greater Trade Routes.

Suo Jia didn't dare waste any time with the issue of the overdraft timeline lingering. He directly left Prairie Fire City and rushed towards the 400km away Icebound City at full speed....

This 400km distance couldn't be underestimated. It wasn't as simple as just crossing it; within 50km, one would encounter at least 800 waves of magical beast attacks. Basically, this journey was the same as charging through a pile of magical beasts.

Based on Suo Jia's previous efficiency, a distance of 400km would need roughly a month to cross. But it was different now; with the help of the Diamond Dragon, Suo Jia could cover the distance in only 4 days!

This seemed a bit exaggerated, but it was actually the reality. Although the Diamond Dragon could only maintain its other form for 20 minutes, it could fly over 50km in that time.

The Diamond Dragon could transform twice in a day, thus advancing 100km. That's why the journey of 400km only required four days to complete. Moreover, this time was also Suo Jia's training time!

With the Diamond Dragon, Suo Jia no longer needed to cross the distance using his strength alone. Only an idiot wouldn't use the Diamond Dragon at his disposal. However, after reverting from its combat state, the dragon needed 12 hours to recover. Thus, Suo Jia alone couldn't possibly advance. If he really did try, he'd definitely die before even realizing it.

Suo Jia sat cross-legged in his tent, frenzily absorbing and gathering information from his meditation. This was obtaining knowledge from the 24 hours of communication between his subconscious and the magical elements. By spending only 6 hours every day, he could absorb all the information from the past 24 hours.

Aside from magic power and spirit power, the most important thing to a mage was knowledge. This knowledge pertained to comprehension of the magical elements. By grasping this knowledge, one could lower the amount of magic power needed to activate magic. Their magic power would become denser, and they'd gain better control over their magic. The magic power's might would also grow. There were many benefits to this, and it could be summarized as boosting the magic power's awe in all aspects.

Knowledge was actually comprised of knowing and recognizing. One had to know the magical elements' habits and characteristics, as well as their unique traits and how they manifested themselves. Only then could one truly understand and learn new magics.

Suo Jia's current levels of magic power and spirit power had already reached terrifyingly high levels. However, because his level of knowledge was too low, he was currently unable to learn more advanced magics. If he didn't comprehend them, he couldn't even grasp them, let alone control them!

As he frenzily absorbed the knowledge, a blue ball of light enveloped Suo Jia. Finally, a sliver of comprehension appeared in Suo Jia's mind! In that instant, Suo Jia could only sense countless blue glows jumping around excitedly. When he saw these, he couldn't help but feel a burst of delight.

Suo Jia slowly opened his eyes, and the world before him was now completely different. Although he'd already left the meditation state, Suo Jia could still sense the jumping water elements around his body. He couldn't see them, but he could still feel this happening. Was this the Magister realm?

Suo Jia felt grateful as he closed his eyes once more and carefully felt around for any changes in his body. His magic power had become more concentrated, and its fluctuations were more powerful. Even his strands of spirit power had become tougher.

Suo Jia joyously re-opened his eyes. Judging from the changes in his body, Suo Jia could ascertain that after so long, he'd finally broken through the Great Mage realm, and become a Magister!

As a Magister, Suo Jia could learn a new ice elemental magic—Hailstone. This magic was just creating hailstones and using them to attack enemies. The range of attack Hailstone had was much larger than Ice Roar's, and...although Ice Roar's attack range could be boosted, there was little margin to do so, and so the range was pretty much set. However, Hailstone was different; its attack range could go up to double Ice Roar's.

Ice Roar's attack range was basically 10-20 meters, with the limit of 20 meters being extremely hard to surpass. However, Hailstone's attack range was 20-40 meters. Although it wasn't as good as Fire Meteor's 50-100 meters, this was simply a difference in trait. In terms of power, it wasn't any weaker than Fire Meteor Shower.

Although it is called Hailstone, it absolutely could not be lumped together with natural hailstones. The Hailstone magic was actually thousands of Ice Arrows descending from the sky, attacking all life forms within the attack perimeter. These arrows contained large amounts of freezing air in addition to the amount each Ice Arrow originally contained.

Hailstone magic was a mid-ranged magic. It was not only able to ceaselessly shoot at the enemy, it could also use the cold air to freeze them, and even encase them within ice. The Ice Arrow was a single-target attack, Ice Roar was a small-scale magic, while Hailstone was a mid-scale magic, meaning that ice mages became truly frightening after learning Hailstone. That was when they'd be able to massacre large numbers of enemies.

This 20 meter attack range didn't refer to attacking enemies within a 20 meter diameter circle. In reality, everything within 20 meters away from the central point of the attacks was shot at. In the end, this formed a circle 40 meters in diameter. After

mastering the elementary level Hailstone magic, Suo Jia would have the ability to simultaneously use magic attacks on everything within a 40 meter diameter!

Chapter 328 – Grand Auction Pt. 1

Suo Jia was able to achieve something that was originally supposed to take one month in just four days. Although the mighty Diamond Dragon still wasn't anywhere close to unrivaled in the Greater Trade Routes' first checkpoint at the moment, it could use its short-range gliding abilities to easily cross over the obstructing magical beasts and allow Suo Jia to quickly advance through his business.

Around two days after heading out, the surrounding landscape rapidly began to change. The temperature quickly dropped, and pure white snow appeared on both sides of the road. The wind that blew in his face also became colder.

As an unequaled overlord of the ice element, the Diamond Dragon seemed to enjoy this environment. Its ability to maintain its combat state alone had been extended by 10 minutes. After all... the surrounding temperature was low, and cold air naturally took longer to disperse.

Because of the change in environment, Suo Jia was able to reach his destination in only 3.5 days instead of 4. At noon of the third day, Suo Jia finally stepped into Icebound City. The exhausted Diamond Dragon was in a deep sleep on his shoulder. Just 10 minutes prior, the Dragon had just dispersed its larger form in a forest a kilometer away from the city; it was now extremely tired.

From the historical records of the Diamond Dragon's characteristics, Suo Jia had finally been able to understand its several states. The normal Diamond Dragon wasn't actually supposed to be named as such, but rather a Crystal Dragon. When it entered its combat state, it would be a true Diamond Dragon.

Because of the differences between these two states, the Diamond Dragon's normal form should actually be called crystal state. It was very weak, and fragile like glass. But once it entered the diamond

state, the dragon would become a peerless war dragon.

Diamond was a well known natural mineral, with its trait being the hardest material. The Diamond Dragon in the diamond state was also the toughest of creatures. No force could break through the Diamond Dragon's armor during its most flourishing period. That's why...the reason it's called Diamond Dragon wasn't just because of its appearance, but its incomparable hardness!

As soon as they entered Icebound City, Suo Jia went straight to the Commerce Union General HQ. With his status as a merchant, he purchased a street in real estate. After all...with a high-end good like Blazing Liquor, Suo Jia didn't plan on giving any profits to other merchants.

The Blazing Liquor was priceless in Icebound City. No matter how high a price Suo Jia sold it to other merchants, they would definitely earn at least twice the amount. Moreover, this high of a price was clearly not suitable for large consumption. Like this, Suo Jia wouldn't even be able to earn half the amount, and the sales volume of the Blazing Liquor would decrease. This definitely wasn't something Suo Jia could accept.

Icebound City was a small-scale city with a population of around 200,000. Because it produced Heaven tier Freezing Fruits, it was an extremely busy city. Many foreign warriors would rush here and search for the fruits. As long as they could find just one, they'd have enough to raise a family for several years. Within a thousand meter perimeter, only Icebound City produced these Freezing Fruits.

Icebound City's current consensus was 200,000 residents and 400,000 visitors. Every day, several hundred thousand people would enter and leave. This could be said to be the liveliest city at the first checkpoint. Thus...Suo Jia had chosen this place to open his first shop, with the Blazing Liquor as its main product.

It was a well-known fact that the liquor could warm the body,

excite the blood flow, resist the harsh cold, and even replace food when hungry. Putting aside the residents, the visitors that had come to search for money needed large amounts of Blazing Liquor to protect themselves when going out for their money retrieval.

The size of the shop wasn't very large. With Suo Jia being vouched for by his previous credit from successful transactions, he was able to obtain a small-scale shop around 200 ping in size. Although its position wasn't ideal, it wasn't too isolated either. The place wasn't large, but Suo Jia only needed room for a display counter and a few bottles of liquor.

Of course, he naturally had to place some round tables and seats in the store as well. It couldn't support major meals, but some savory dishes to supplement the liquor could be bought at restaurants in the city and brought here. He'd sell these dishes for as much as he bought them. Suo Jia didn't pay any mind to the money earned from the food.

Using the Trade Route coins on him, Suo Jia employed ten salespersons. He then placed all the Blazing Liquor in the storehouse at the back. However, Suo Jia was stuck at the difficulty of the next step.

Suo Jia had gone to the Adventure Union to check that Icebound City definitely didn't have any place selling Blazing Liquor. After all, one could bring back a few barrels of it during the two month round trip. How much would they sell it for? If they sold it for too high, who would be able to afford it? Aside from Suo Jia, who else in this world possessed second and third generation interspatial rings? There were only a bit over a thousand 1 cubic meter rings that existed, so how could they ship very many barrels?

Only Suo Jia, with his Diamond Dragon's assistance, could rush over to Prairie Fire City in 3.5 days. Only he possessed 100 cubic meter third generation rings, as well as the nine 10 cubic meter second generation rings. Thus, he was also the only one that could ship such large amounts and earn huge profits.

After pondering this for a long time, Suo Jia finally decided that...he wouldn't sell the liquor in barrels. Although these barrels weren't big, about the size of trash cans, it wasn't like he could let everyone carry around barrels while adventuring.

Storing the liquor in bottles was the best way to circulate it around. One barrel cost 1000 Trade Route coins, but when stored into 10 bottles, each bottle was also 1000. A price of 1000 didn't count as very high. Finding a single rank one Freezing Fruit could be sold for 100,000 Trade Route coins!

1000 Trade Route coins was basically a third of the residents' monthly incomes. However, to the gold searchers, this was only the tiniest of tiny amounts. With the Blazing Liquor, they'd be able to move outside of Icebound City for their pursuit of gold with greater protection, as they would at least not freeze to death outside.

After making this decision, Suo Jia found a local sundry goods market to buy 100,000 bottles at 1 Trade Route coin each. They were shaped like gourds, and scarlet red in color. There were also two, large crimson words like rising fire written on the bottles: Blazing Flames!

Afterwards, 10 beautiful female salesmen picked up leaflets, and as per Suo Jia's orders, began to distribute them around the 10 busiest areas of the city. At the same time, Suo Jia quickly left Icebound City and rushed back towards Prairie Fire City without stopping.

During the following month, Suo Jia's Life Protection completed the orange level, and the Diamond Dragon broke through the scarlet level, beginning to advance into the orange level. Without wasting training time, Suo Jia also rushed back and forth between the cities four times. He made a round trip every week, shipping a total of 4000 barrels of Blazing Liquor to Icebound City.

Just as Suo Jia had expected, the Blazing Liquor's special

abilities, powerful strength, and fragrant aroma threw all of Icebound City into turmoil. 40,000 bottles were sold out as soon as they were put onto the market, and Suo Jia was able to earn a wild amount of 40 million in a single month. This speed was so fast that anyone who heard it would be shocked.

This might seem exaggerated, but this was where the profits of the beverage market lay. 1000 Trade Route coins per barrel had been split into 10 bottles by Suo Jia, and yet each bottle was still sold for 1000. The profits gained was too great. Moreover... Icebound City's 400,000 gold seekers could use up these 40,000 bottles within a single day. In reality, even with Suo Jia's shipping abilities, he'd never be able to satisfy the demand.

Now that he had money, Suo Jia could finally carry out the second step of his plans. He temporarily stopped his shipping of Blazing Liquor, and stayed at an inn for a while. The following afternoon was the monthly Grand Auction. Suo Jia hadn't had the money to attend the previous Grand Auction, but this time money wasn't a problem.

Time continued to flow. The next afternoon, Suo Jia used his status as a rich merchant to enter the VIP room of the auction house. His large amount of transactions had allowed his popularity in Icebound City to significantly rise. Everyone knew that Suo Jia had earned a large amount of money within that month. Thus, the auction house boss immediately granted Suo Jia VIP status. Only rich people could spend large amounts of money, especially adventurers like Suo Jia, who earned money just to spend it. As long as the item was good, who cared about the money? Such people were willing to pay it out, no matter the price.

The Grand Auction soon began. Goods appeared on the stage one after another: Legendary ranked equipment, various rare ores, and even some magical pets. Although these all continued to be displayed, they were unable to attract the attention of Suo Jia, who already owned a complete Epic ranked equipment set and the most

powerful magical pet, the Diamond Dragon.

A large portion of the Grand Auction soon passed. The Freezing Fruits that Suo Jia had anticipated for so long finally made their appearance. Naturally, the first ones to appear were rank one Freezing Fruits.

The auctioneer on the stage opened a jade box in his hands and said to the audience, “This is a rank one Freezing Fruit that was picked 3 days ago. The price being asked is 100,000. Everyone please make your bids!”

Chapter 329 – Grand Auction Pt. 2

Suo Jia couldn't help but drop his jaw open in shock and seemingly forgetting himself, shouted, "Wait! Doesn't the fruit have to be eaten within a day of picking it? This has already been 3 days, hasn't it rotted already?"

The entire auction house fell silent for a moment, before it suddenly burst into booming laughter. At the same time, the auctioneer smiled wryly and said, "This gentleman over here probably just came here recently and doesn't understand. In that case, as the auctioneer, I'll give you a simple explanation!"

The auctioneer raised the jade box in his hand and stated, "Ladies and gentlemen, please look carefully. This item holding the Freezing Fruit is a Thousand Year Mysterious Ice Box. The good thing about this box is that it can store magic fruits for a long time, extending its time limit from one day to one month!"

"Wow!" Suo Jia couldn't help but cry out in astonishment. He excitedly asked, "There's something this amazing? How come I've never heard of it before?"

"Haha..." The auctioneer smiled and patiently answered, "This Mysterious Ice Box costs an extremely high amount. Typically, only those that spend their lives collecting magic fruits use it. Moreover...this kind of box made from thousand year old Mysterious Ice can only be used for 1000 days. After 1000 days, the cold air will disappear, and the box will lose its ability to maintain freshness."

"1000 days!" Suo Jia excitedly looked at the box in the auctioneer's hands and exclaimed in delight, "Then, where can this kind of box be bought? And exactly how much does it cost?"

If this were before, the auctioneer wouldn't ever answer this question. But firstly, Suo Jia now had VIP status, and he couldn't be offended. Secondly, the Grand Auction's climax today was

related to his question.

The auctioneer loudly declared, “This gentlemen asked a very good question. Typically speaking, the Mysterious Ice Box requires one to order from a specialized smith. It’s extremely rare. But coincidentally, the climax of today’s Grand Auction is a Ten Thousand Year Mysterious Ice Box. It can store any magic fruit and extend its freshness from one day to a year. Moreover..the Ten Thousand Year Mysterious Ice Box can be used for ten thousand days before it loses its functionality.”

“Wow!” The entire crowd couldn’t help but inhale sharply in shock at the auctioneer’s words. At the same time, the auctioneer continued to excite them by saying, “Ten thousand days is nearly 30 years of functionality. Moreover...it can prolong a magic fruit’s freshness for an entire year. If anyone is interested, you’ll have to prepare your money well, and make sure not to miss this chance!”

The auction continued to advance. Suo Jia symbolically bought four rank one Freezing Fruits, then focused on waiting for the climax. The reason he’d bought four was because Suo Jia estimated that the Mysterious Ice Box could store four fruits.

Finally, the auction entered its final stretch. The auctioneer carefully raised a colorless, transparent Mysterious Ice Box. Seeing that the box was actually so large, Suo Jia couldn’t help but gape in shock. The magic fruits were only about the size of ping pong balls; with the box’s size, storing even 20 wouldn’t be a problem!

The auctioneer lightly opened the lid and introduced, “The Ten Thousand Year Mysterious Ice Box was meticulously carved out. There are 20 empty spaces inside, making it able to simultaneously preserve 20 magic fruits.”

The auctioneer smiled. “I won’t repeat the benefits of this box. In order to make best use of everyone’s time, I’ll begin the auction. The starting price is 10 million Trade Route coins. Everyone, please make your bids!”

“10 million!” Suo Jia jumped up in excitement. He hadn’t thought that such an amazing treasure would actually start at such a low price!

The entire auction house fell silent. Seeing how quiet everyone was, the auctioneer thought that the price he’d started with was too high, and hurriedly explained, “Ladies and gentlemen, don’t think that this Ten Thousand Year box was easy to make. The details of this Mysterious Ice require ten thousand years to form. This is only the second of its kind in the history of Icebound City. The first one was discovered over a hundred years ago.”

“I bid 11 million!” Someone finally called a bid.

Once another price was named, the auction became lively. 12, 13, 14...the bids called out quickly rose to 20 million. Now, the ones offering bids had become sparse. After all...not everyone could hand over so much money at once.

There were many people present, and there were countless rich and powerful figures. Faced with this jade box, everyone went wild.. Actually...it wasn’t that nobody had wanted to buy it earlier, but the fact that they didn’t know how much to bid. Now that someone had already named a price, it didn’t matter how much money was called, they had to buy it.

As everyone wildly yelled out prices...the Ten Thousand Year Mysterious Ice Box rapidly reached a high price of 30 million. Now, there were only three people bidding. Everyone else had already lost the privilege of naming prices. The current value was one that the average person couldn’t even hope to strive for.

Seeing that the price had passed 30 million so quickly, Suo Jia finally began to grow worried. Suo Jia only had 40 million total on him. Although he still had some leftover money, Suo Jia didn’t believe that this small amount of money could decide anything.

In his panic, Suo Jia suddenly shouted loudly, “I bid 35 million!”

Hearing Suo Jia suddenly raise the price by 5 million in one go... two of the remaining three people immediately backed out of the fight. It wasn't that they lacked money, but because no matter how rich a merchant they were, they didn't have much cash on them. A qualified merchant would never let so much money accumulate in their hands. One could only earn money by constantly allowing it to flow.

The two merchants glared intensely at Suo Jia's VIP room, and gritted their teeth in anger. They were both super rich and powerful figures from families with several billion. It wasn't that they lacked wealth, but that at that exact moment, they only had so much cash on them. Waiting for someone to lend them money was impossible. That required 10 minutes at the very least. But by the time these 10 minutes were up, the item would've already been sold away. The auctioneer couldn't possibly wait for people.

The auctioneer loudly declared on the stage, "Alright, VIP Room #6 has already bid 35 million! Are there any higher bids? Any at all?!"

Suo Jia's heart had already jumped into his throat as he watched the auctioneer onstage. He knew that the auctioneer would ask three times in a row. If nobody else bid in that time, the mallet would fall, and then the Ten Thousand Year Mysterious Ice Box would belong to Suo Jia. At the moment, the auctioneer only needed to ask one more time!

"I bid 40 million!" Just as the auctioneer had asked a final time and was about to drop his mallet, a strong voice rang through the auction house.

"Plop..." Suo Jia fell back into his seat, staring blankly at the VIP room that had bid. 40 million was already all of Suo Jia's assets.

After hearing that the price had actually reached 40 million already, the auctioneer was so happy that he almost fainted. He raised his mallet with a trembling hand and shakingly said, "Right

now, this gentleman has already bid 40 million. Are there any higher bids? Any at all?”

Suo Jia blankly stared at the auctioneer, and grabbed his head in frustration. If he missed this chance, he'd probably have to wait over a hundred years for a treasure like this to appear again. That Ten Thousand Year Mysterious Ice Box was really too important to Suo Jia. No matter what, he refused to give this opportunity up!

As he thought this, the auctioneer had already asked a second time. Seeing that the opportunity to obtain the Ten Thousand Year Mysterious Ice Box was just about slip from his hands, Suo Jia stood up, refusing to reconcile. He couldn't...he couldn't just lose this chance, right?

“No!” With a furious roar, Suo Jia abruptly opened his interspatial ring and shakingly searched through it. Scattered Trade Route coins slowly piled up on his table...

“Final call: any higher bids?! Any?! Alright...none? Then...” As the auctioneer spoke, he raised the mallet in his hand, and let it whiz through the air as it descended.

Chapter 330 – Flash Freezing Ability Pt. 1

“Wait a minute!” Just as the mallet was about to strike the table, an angry roar rang out.

If it were any other auctioneer, it would’ve been too late for them to retract the mallet, and it would’ve heavily fallen. Once it struck the surface, the transaction couldn’t be changed again. Fortunately...this auctioneer was experienced enough to stabilize the mallet in the last instant...at the moment, it was less than a centimeter away from the platform.

The auctioneer raised his head in bewilderment, unable to comprehend. It was already such a high price, yet someone still wanted to raise? The auctioneer wasn’t the only one puzzled, all the spectators also turned their heads to look at Box #6.

From within the box, Suo Jia swiftly counted the large pile of coins on his table and loudly shouted, “I bid 4000012226 Trade Route coins!”

In response to Suo Jia’s words, the entire auction house fell silent for a moment before it suddenly became filled with loud laughter. Some people groaned, “Heavens! Where does this young brother think he is? An item up for auction in this place can never be sold based on just a few hundred Trade Route coins!”

As expected, as soon as Suo Jia finished speaking, the earlier voice rang out once more. “Hahaha...this gentleman over here is really interesting, to even take out 126 coins. Are you trying to look down on me? In that case, I’ll bet 40000127!”

“Plop...” Suo Jia fell back into his seat in despair. There was nothing else he could, he really didn’t have any more money. He’d searched through all his interspatial rings just now, but had been unable to find any significant amount.

At the platform, the auctioneer loudly declared, “Are there any

other bets? Any at all? None? Then...”

“Dong!” With a loud sound, the auctioneer’s mallet heavily fell onto the platform. At the same time, he shouted, “Congratulations to the friend in Box #4. This Ten Thousand Year Mysterious Ice Box is yours!”

“Hahahaha...” A sudden burst of wild laughter came from inside Box #4. At the same time, one of the staff members walked over towards VIP Box #4 with the auction house’s card. According to auction rules, any business transactions had to be completed on site.

Suo Jia sat in his seat in despair. Although he was very disappointed, he no longer had any regrets. He’d used up the last of his efforts already; if the matter still ended up as such, he couldn’t do anything about it.

Suo Jia couldn’t help but faintly smile as he shook his head and stood up. Just as he was prepared to turn around and leave, a cold voice suddenly called out from within Box #4, “This VIP customer, your card only has 4000126 coins remaining, you’re still missing 1. Please immediately settle this!”

Heating the auctioneer’s words, the bold voice from within the box cried out in shock, “What? How could I be missing 1 coin? Ok, ok, ok....wait a minute, I’ll look for it.” As he spoke, one could hear the sounds of things being flipped through in search.

Soon after, the bold voice returned in an increasingly more anxious tone, “Look at me, I only brought the card when I came out, and didn’t bring money. Isn’t it just one coin? I’ll immediately call someone to bring the money over!”

“That’s...” The staff member said in a low voice, “Mister, this isn’t your first time attending an auction, right? If you cannot pull out all the money here on site, then not only have you lost the right to possess the Ten Thousand Year Mysterious Ice Box, but you will also suffer a fine worth a hundredfold of the item’s price.

This is the punishment for your evil intentions while bidding!”

“Gasp!” All the people present couldn’t help but inhale sharply. Indeed...the auction house did have such a rule. You could call out whatever bids you wanted, but if you dared to raise with evil intent and were unable to actually pay up then and there, you had to pay the penalty fine of hundredfold the item’s price!

This penalty may seem too strict, but the reason this rule existed was to completely put an end to those betters with malicious intent. An unfortunate consequence awaited those that dared to try. The auction house had clear arrangements; even a deficiency of 1 coin resulted in the punishment fine!

Hearing this, the fellow in VIP Box #4 finally panicked, and he nervously stated, “Wait you guys, wait just a moment. Let me look a bit more. Isn’t it just 1 coin? I can definitely find it!”

Faced with this request, the staff member didn’t force the customer to do anything, and simply stood there to wait. It didn’t matter how long it took; as long as the customer could pay over the money there, he was qualified. But if he couldn’t bring the money out...

Everyone waited as that rich and powerful person anxiously flipped through his things in search, going through all his possessions dozens of times. However...to someone that never carried around cash, how was it possible to suddenly find something like that? He hadn’t ever had such things on his person before...

Finally, the rich and powerful person sat down paralysed on his chair. Seeing this, the staff member excitedly turned around. They were always waiting for good chances like this every auction. Once someone betting with malicious intentions was discovered, the auction house would gain the profit from the hundredfold penalty!

If it were anyone else, they might not have been able to even afford this penalty. However, this fellow was one that everyone

recognised; although he wasn't the wealthiest in Icebound City, his social status was worth over 3 billion. Even if he couldn't compensate for the 4 billion penalty, 3 billion was already decent. This time, the auction house had hit the jackpot!

Back at the stage, the staff member and the auctioneer exchanged a few words. The auctioneer then coolly said, "Everyone has witnessed it; someone in today's auction made a bad with evil intent. Thus...I represent the Global Auction Alliance to formally announce that VIP Box #4's auction rights are revoked. At the same time, he must pay the hundredfold fine!"

The auctioneer paused for a bit, before turning around to look towards the box that Suo Jia was residing in. "Because VIP Box #6 suffered from the malice...according to the Global Auction Alliance regulations, he will obtain this good according to the price he'd bid!"

"Holy crap!" Suo Jia was at loss for words. No matter what, he hadn't ever imagined that he'd be able to fight with a single coin for something in this auction. Neither Suo Jia nor the person in VIP Box #4 had imagined that beyond coincidence, they both had only 40000126 coins. Whoever bid it first would get it first. If the other party dared to continue bidding, they'd be fined to death! A hundredfold penalty was an astronomical value!

After the roller coaster of events, Suo Jia blankly settled the auctioned good's costs, and obtained the Ten Thousand Year Mysterious Ice Box. Only then did he dare to believe that everything was real. How could something like this happen!

Suo Jia dazedly left the auction house, and slowly strolled along the main street. After a long while...Suo Jia finally came to his senses. Seeing the constant flow of people along the road, Suo Jia had a sudden realization; no matter how dangerous a situation was, one still had to continue struggling for victory with all their effort. Only after offering up one's very last remnant of strength would God requite them!

The object was something worth 40 million, yet its final owner had depended on just a single coin. That minor of a difference had allowed Suo Jia to gain the Ten Thousand Year Mysterious Ice Box for almost free of charge. At the same time, that difference of a single coin was enough for the rich merchant to lose his family fortune. There was, after all, a thin line between heaven and hell.

Suo Jia shook his head and sighed in admiration. Although this was just one auction, the lesson that he'd learned from it was priceless. After what had happened today, Suo Jia would never concede easily, unless he'd really tried all he could.

Suo Jia abruptly stopped in his tracks, his head covered with cold sweat that swiftly dripped downwards. When he thought back, he seemed to also have made a malicious bid. He'd indeed had 40000216 coins, but one couldn't forget that Suo Jia had spent nearly 500,000 to buy the four rank one Freezing Fruits. In that case..where had the money come from?

The sweat on Suo Jia's forehead continued to flow down like rain as he pulled out a Freezing Fruit. If that fellow hadn't been missing a coin and been fined hundredfold and Suo Jia's previous bid had granted it to him, he definitely would've been the one fined in the end. The line splitting Heaven and Hell really was so minor!

Chapter 331 – Flash Freezing Ability Pt. 2

After the scare, Suo Jia wiped away the cold sweat on his brow and tossed the rank one Freezing Fruit into the Diamond Dragon's mouth. After closing its jaws around the entire thing, the Diamond Dragon heartily gulped it down.

Seeing the little pet swallow, Suo Jia couldn't help but activate Spirit's Eye and closely examine the dragon. It had a half red and half orange Life Protection strip, but after eating the Freezing Fruit, another energy strip appeared that was deep blue in color. At the moment, this energy strip was being enshrouded by a blue mist.

Suo Jia stared at the blue energy strip in excitement. He knew that this was a special ability energy strip. Once the Freezing Fruit's flash freezing ability was activated, it would consume this blue energy. When the energy was completely exhausted, it would disappear, and the flash freezing ability would not be able to be reactivated until this energy was restored.

This flash freezing was a type of ability that quickly froze an object. It could be used independently or as a supplement. As for its exact effects, he'd have to use it in a practical sense to know.

As he was observing this, all the blue mist around the energy strip suddenly began to surge. It progressed so fiercely that Suo Jia was worried the energy strip would just burst!

Suo Jia couldn't help but feel astonishment as he watched the blue mist surge to its maximum point. The extent to which it was excited determined the Diamond Dragon's maturation rate, and represented its talent. According to what the old village chief had said, this Diamond Dragon's flash freezing maturation was too ridiculous. It was possible that it only needed two Freezing Fruits as boost to enter the next realm!

Suo Jia didn't dare waste any time, and directly left Icebound

City to rush towards Prairie Fire City at full speed. This was firstly because he wanted to ship the Blazing Wine back as soon as possible, and secondly, because he wanted to test the effects of the flash freezing ability.

After leaving the city, Suo Jia suddenly commanded the Diamond Dragon to leap into the air. At the same time, a flash of blue light burst outwards, and layers of Glacial Armor rumbled as they appeared on the Diamond Dragon's body, one after another. By the time the dragon had finally landed on the ground, it was now a great Diamond Dragon the size of a 9 meter tall building that stood before Suo Jia.

The instant before the Diamond Dragon had even jumped up, Suo Jia had already made his move and activated the Unrivaled Wave Walking to stand in midair. When the Diamond Dragon descended to the ground, Suo Jia was suspended just above it, and he lightly landed on its bus-sized head.

Sensing Suo Jia's appearance, the Diamond Dragon's mouth tilted upwards and...Suo Jia's body gradually began to fall downwards. In just a few seconds, Suo Jia was sitting on the embedded Ice Seal throne. At the same time, the Diamond Dragon had begun to race forwards with all its strength.

Throughout the entire journey, Suo Jia was anticipating the sight of the surrounding forest. Soon afterwards, the trees in front of them seemed to shake, and a few dozen enormous magical beasts leapt out to block their path!

"Crimson Bears?" Seeing the creatures that had once easily defeated the Diamond Dragon, Suo Jia licked his lips in excitement and looked at the Diamond Dragon underneath his feet. At the moment...the dragon was clearly a bit afraid. After all...the Crimson Bears with inexhaustible brute strength had once easily shattered the Diamond Dragon's Glacial Armor, there was no way it couldn't feel fear!

Seeing the dragon's scared appearance, Suo Jia couldn't help but jokingly scold, "You brat, what are you afraid of? These guys just have some more strength, some thicker defense. However, their speed is very slow, and they cannot fly. That's why, there is absolutely no danger involved with facing against them. Even if we lose, you can just immediately fly back to my shoulder. I can use the Unrivalled Wave Walking to pass through the air, and use speed to shake them off."

The Diamond Dragon rubbed its head and thought over Suo Jia's words for a bit. As its intelligence that was at the level of a 10 year old child's, it quickly understood that Suo Jia had meant to say that while these guys had higher defense, there was nothing to fear. Even if they could defeat the Diamond Dragon, they didn't possibly have the ability to kill it!

Noticing that the Diamond Dragon was no longer fearful, Suo Jia loudly declared, "You brat, the current you is different from the previous you. Go on...use the Freezing Fruit's energy!"

The Diamond Dragon's eyes naturally lit up. The next moment... a beautiful blue glow flashed gloriously from the center of its core.

"Crunch...crunch...crunch..." Clear crunching sounds could be heard as the Diamond Dragon's pale blue body quickly changed to a deeper color. As the blue light extended outwards, the entire Diamond Dragon transformed into a gem-colored blue; it was a beauty that would make anyone breathless at the sight!

Seated on the Ice Seal Throne, Suo Jia waved his hand and said, "Alright, now let me see your performance. Charge over and let them have a proper taste of how mighty the effects of the Freezing Fruit's special ability are!"

The Diamond Dragon's legs suddenly spread apart as its body abruptly burst upwards. Its pair of enormous wings flapped powerfully in midair, and like an arrow being shot out, it dived down towards the Crimson Bears below.

The Crimson Bears were very large and sturdy, but who were they comparing to? Those three meter tall, extremely thick and solid Crimson Bears seemed like infants in front of the nine meter tall Diamond Dragon.

“Bang!” With a powerful boom, the Diamond Dragon carrying an incomparably large momentum force abruptly landed on top of a Crimson Bear’s body. While being trampled on in, that pitiful Crimson Bear’s Life Protection shield instantly shattered into pieces!

“Diamond Step!” This was the name Suo Jia had come up with for this move. Up until now, this Diamond Dragon’s strongest attacks had depended on the weight of its body, its momentum, and the great increase of acceleration from falling towards the ground from a height. With this, the destructive power the Diamond Dragon exhibited was several fold greater than its original power level. Even the formidable Crimson Bear couldn’t possibly withstand the Diamond Dragon’s stomp.

It wasn’t just that one Crimson Bear that suffered damage. The large impact induced a formless shockwave coming from the Diamond Dragon’s body. This boundless cold air dispersed in all four corners, causing many of the bears to begin shivering. Under this explosive attack, the dozens of Crimson Bears simultaneously collapsed. Although they hadn’t suffered from much harm, they were in an extremely pitiful state.

When were beasts the most frightening? That’s right....injured beasts were the most terrifying, the most wild. In that moment, stimulated by the fear of meeting miserable ends under the Diamond Dragon’s feet, the dozens of Crimson Bears became crazed. Having completely lost their minds, red glows burst out from their bodies as they entered a half-crazed state.

“Whoosh...” While the Diamond Dragon let out an Ice Dragon’s Breath and successfully froze one of the Crimson Bears, the other eight bears had circled around the Diamond Dragon with their

large and sharp paws raised high as they frenzily swung them around. A clear ring sounded out as the Diamond Dragon closed its eyes in fear. His previous experience told him that these Crimson Bears' paws could easily rip his Glacial Armor apart!

However, after a long while, the Diamond Dragon only felt a slight vibration against his body, yet didn't feel anything off. In surprise, it opened its eyes to look down at its body, and saw that the Crimson Bears' attack with their claws had only left five, deep scars. Aside from this, there was no other trace of the attack.

The Crimson Bears' sharp claws were very long, at least 10 centimeters in length. However, the Diamond Dragon was a height of 9 meters and was extremely thick and sturdy. Its armor was nearly 2 meters thick. What damage could 10 centimeters possibly do?

The Diamond Dragon's scale-like armor cancelled out most of the damage. Plus...with the help of the Freezing Fruits special ability, the hardness of the mysterious ice making up its body had been increased. At the moment...the Crimson Bears were no longer able to inflict any physical harm on the Diamond Dragon.

The five deep claw scars only stayed for 3 seconds because the cold air began to condense together, quickly making the scars disappear. The Diamond Dragon's entire body once again returned to its sleek state, reflecting off bright blue rays of light.

Raising its head to roar at the skies, the Diamond Dragon suddenly turned around and its nine meter long and extremely thick tail powerfully swept across...instantly the Crimson Bears were all lashed onto the ground. At the same time, the Diamond Dragon abruptly lifted its large foot to stomp towards the Crimson Bears on the ground.

What followed after was practically torture. Those Crimson Bears' Life Protections would completely disappear after only 3-4 of the Diamond Dragon's violent stomps, and the bears would be

crushed to a pulp.

The Diamond Dragon's tail, feet, and claws, pretty much all of its attack weapons, had been used. Although the Crimson Bears were relentlessly attacking the dragon as well, the Diamond Dragon completely ignored it all. With little effort, it killed all the Crimson Bears right then and there.

Suo Jia's jaw hung open in shock as he stared at the Diamond Dragon currently as berserk as a large, barbarous creature. Was this the unrivaled Diamond Dragon from the legends? This was really too frightening. With an unequalled defense, it could completely ignore any attacks. It could then use its powerful physical attacks to rip the enemy into pieces. Suo Jia couldn't think of any existence that could possibly defeat the Diamond Dragon!

Chapter 332 – Magic Automaton Baltic Pt. 1

A bit over a month ago, the Crimson Bears had been able to very easily rip apart the Diamond Dragon and smash it into pieces. But now, a month later, with the Diamond Dragon's evolved armor and its new ability—Flash Freezing, it could completely ignore all attacks.

The Freezing Fruit could drastically lower the Diamond Dragon's body temperature. Although the rate at which the cold air dispersed remained the same, the total amount of freezing air within the Diamond Dragon's body had changed. Over the course of time, the Diamond Dragon had become able to maintain its transformation for 30 minutes at a time.

Three days. Suo Jia had only taken three days to rush back to Prairie Fire City. Whenever he encountered any magical beasts obstructing his path, the Diamond Dragon could just plow through them like a large truck. Before the magical beasts could even dodge, they'd pretty much be buried underneath the Diamond Dragon's feet.

Without any delays, Suo Jia directly stored 1000 barrels of wine and then turned back to rush towards Icebound City. He did this constantly for a month up until the day before the monthly auction before stopping his shipping. At this point, the money in Suo Jia's possession had already reached 100 million Trade Route coins!

Within this month, Suo Jia's Life Protection had reached the gold level. But outside of his expectations, the Diamond Dragon's Freezing energy hadn't filled in the slightest. In reality, that blue energy strip only occupied a fifth of the entire strip.

Suo Jia could only race to a library and start researching materials. If it were any other place, these kinds of materials might be difficult to find. However, since Icebound City was the source of

production for the Freezing Fruits, researching resources about the Freezing Fruits were as easy as turning over one's palm.

The materials indicated that unlike other magic fruits, the Freezing Fruits' unique trait was that the slower they reacted, the better. It was like water, acting opposite from other matter. While other matter would expand with heat and contract when cooled, water did the opposite.

The Diamond Dragon's innate talent was something that could never be doubted. There was no other creature talented in the ice element that could possibly even come close to rivaling the Diamond Dragon. The higher the innate skill, the slower its rate in which which its energy strip filled up became.

If it were Suo Jia that was eating these fruits, it was possible that a month would be enough to complete the first realm. But that same first realm was determined by the completely different effects the Freezing Fruits had.

If 100 people simultaneously used the Freezing Fruits, the activated abilities would all produce different effects. Those with greater talent would have more lowered temperatures, while those with less talent would have less lowered temperatures. The exact values couldn't be measured, so there weren't actual numbers, but the difference could be clearly felt.

Now, the Diamond Dragon's energy improvement was extremely slow. While others had already completed one energy strip, the Diamond Dragon had only filled $\frac{1}{5}$. However, when it activated Flash Freezing, its cooling level was much greater than a normal person's. Advancement rate was inversely proportional to cooling degree.

Four rank one Freezing Fruits could only fill $\frac{1}{5}$ of the Diamond Dragon's energy strip. In other words, the dragon still needed 16 rank one Freezing Fruits. That would cost at least 1.6 million coins!

This may seem cheap, but it was only a rank one Freezing Fruit.

Rank two Freezing Fruits would be around 100,000 coins, rank three would be a million, and who knew where one was supposed to find the money for those above rank three.

Suo Jia looked up materials on the Freezing Fruits and furrowed his brows. According to calculations, the Diamond Dragon would need 5 months of time to advance to the second level. Wasn't that a bit too slow?

Originally, Suo Jia had prepared to start using the Freezing Fruits for his own special ability on this trip. But now, Suo Jia was suddenly hesitant.

Higher talent meant slower energy growth rate, but energy consumption would be greater. Lower talent would mean increased energy growth rate, but energy consumption would be less. Did Suo Jia wish to have greater talent or less talent?

Suo Jia would rather have lower talent, and at least be able grow faster, and use the energy even if it wasn't all used, unlike the Diamond Dragon. Although the effects on energy were strong, eating the Freezing Fruits for a month only resulted in accumulating such a little amount of energy. This minor amount wasn't anywhere near enough to use.

In reality, the Freezing Fruit's special trait was the same as the Diamond Dragon's; greater talent meant it could be very powerful, to the extent of being unrivaled, but it needed a very long time. Less talent meant faster advancement rate, but their abilities would only be average.

Suo Jia pondered back and forth, but still couldn't decide. Finally...he thought it through; he couldn't keep wasting time like this. If he didn't quickly choose his ability, Roger and the others would be nearly unrivalled while Suo Jia wouldn't have even started yet.

The Toughening Fruits were the only fruits compatible with others. While this was established, it's important to realize that

Toughening Fruits could be used at the same time as other magic fruits.

Suo Jia closed the book and turned to leave the library. After resting for a bit, Suo Jia rushed back to the auction at 8pm and bought 20 rank 1 Freezing Fruits at once, pretty much buying $\frac{3}{4}$ of the auction's rank 1 Freezing Fruit stock!

Once all the Freezing Fruits were stored in the Ten Thousand Year Mysterious Ice Box, Suo Jia left the auction house and headed straight towards the residence he'd just bought in Icebound City. Today...he'd start using the fruits.

Upon returning to his luxurious residence, Suo Jia entered a training room and opened the Ten Thousand Year Mysterious Ice Box to pull out a Freezing Fruit. He tossed it over to the Diamond Dragon, then threw one into his own mouth, closing his eyes and silently enjoying it. What he hadn't noticed that the fruit he'd eaten hadn't been blue in color, but light purple! However...the blue Ten Thousand Year Mysterious Ice Box and the other Freezing Fruits had concealed it. Moreover, Suo Jia hadn't really been paying attention, and had immediately gulped it down.

While Suo Jia was quietly sensing the changes in his body, the auction house was currently in a mess. The reason was simple: a Heaven tier, rarely seen magic fruit had mysteriously disappeared!

Magic fruits weren't just divided by tier and rank; there were other classifications. In reality, each magic fruit's quantities was different. Some were more common, others were not. Freezing Fruits counted as being in the medium range with respect to numbers. They weren't lacking, so their value was very normal.

Originally, the climax of the auction was supposed to be a rare, extremely priceless Control Fruit. Its ability was to boost the user's controlling ability over water and ice.

The Control Fruit was also called the Ice Control Fruit, and counted as a variant type. Its numbers were extremely small, so its

value reached the extent where a single one cost 10 million. Moreover, it wasn't in any city! The chances of a variant type appearing were very small.

For some reason, when the auction house had brought this climax item onstage, the auctioneer was shocked to discover that the Control Fruit had somehow changed into a normal Freezing Fruit!

Putting aside how the auction house was trying to figure out the reason, Suo Jia had just finally begun to feel the changes from eating the fruit. A purple mist began to surge out from Suo Jia's energy strip. Without a question, Suo Jia's talent in control was extremely great.

"Hm?" Suo Jia stared at the purple mist in confusion. Why was it this color? From the books and materials, the energy produced from the Freezing Fruits should be a dark blue. How could it be purple?

After thinking about it for a bit, Suo Jia suddenly remembered that in the book introducing Freezing Fruits, it had mentioned the name of type of fruit, the Control Fruit. From outer appearance, this fruit was pretty much the same as a Freezing Fruit, but it had a pale purple glow. It counted as a variation of the Freezing Fruit.

Suo Jia stared at the purple mist within his energy strip, and couldn't help but break out into a sweat. It looked like...he'd accidentally mistaken the Control Fruit as a Freezing Fruit and had eaten it.

Suo Jia bitterly smiled as he looked at the purple energy strip. Regretting it now was useless, he'd already eaten it. He couldn't just throw it back up, right? It had already digested, the only thing he could do was wait until he excreted it naturally.

Suo Jia took a deep breath and closed his eyes. With a tug of his hand, a long ice stream once again appeared in Suo Jia's hands. After focusing for a bit, Suo Jia suddenly activated his control

ability!

Chapter 333 – Magic Automaton Baltic Pt. 2

After the control ability was activated, a purple glow suddenly radiated out from Suo Jia's eyes. At the same time, Suo Jia could clearly sense the ice stream's impact force, as well as its speed, agility, and power...all of them had been greatly raised!

When Suo Jia examined the functions of the control ability closer, his expression gradually changed from one of disappointment to one of delight. This Control Fruit wasn't bad at all. After getting a boost in his control ability, Suo Jia could basically rely on his manipulation of the ice stream to retrain his enemies.

Although Suo Jia was only a Mage, both his magic power and spirit power definitely played a part in the strength of his ice stream. The magic power increased the size of the ice stream, while the spirit power increased its power and made it faster!

In addition, when the Control Fruit's control ability combined with Suo Jia's innate and trained manipulation ability, as well as consolidated with the temperature-lowering Ice and Snow Pact, the power that he could burst out would definitely surpass that of any ranked warrior!

In terms of magic, many people would think of the magic's might, destructive ability, attack range, and magic effects. However, very few people knew that magic's true power actually depended upon its control.

For example, the Middle-rank fire elemental magic: Fire Meteor Show, could summon hundreds of meteors in one go, and blast an entire city. However...if one's manipulation ability was extremely powerful, the hundreds of meteors could blast the exact same target multiple times in succession. This was the use of the control ability.

This wasn't just for AOE attacks. In reality, the function of the

control ability ran through all magics. For example, the single-target Mysterious Ice Arrow: using his control ability, Suo Jia could increase the speed of the Mysterious Ice Arrow, and even change its flight path from a straight line to an arc!

Of course...there were still many applications of the control ability which couldn't be listed one after another with examples. The control ability's functional range would never be completely discovered.

Suo Jia looked at the time, and saw that there wasn't much time left before everyone had agreed to meet up again. At the moment, Suo Jia had only received trustable credentials from Enchanting Village, Prairie Fire City, and Icebound City. He was still missing seven of them before Suo Jia's merchant group would be qualified to pass the first checkpoint.

Although he'd earned money from the Blazing Liquor, Suo Jia's objective for coming here wasn't for money purposes, but to continue strengthening himself. Then, he'd go find his father—Soros! From the Adventure Union, Suo Jia had collected real information that Soros hadn't died, and was still healthy. However, he was at the ninth checkpoint of the Greater Trade Routes! This was also the last one. If Suo Jia wanted to find him, he'd have to reach that point. That meant he needed to possess super powerful strength.

However, Suo Jia knew that before heading out, he had to prepare some Control Fruits, because there were none to eat along the journey. Suo Jia's current Life Protection was already max gold level, and he didn't any plans to continue eating. In other words, this was already enough.

The next morning, Suo Jia rushed back to the auction house to purchase some Control Fruits. The auction house wasn't just a place to auction off items, but was actually a place that purchased items as well. If the item was good and had enough value to auction, they would be purchased, and then auctioned off.

Hearing Suo Jia's intention, the auction house head expressed that they could sell Suo Jia three Control Fruits for the price of 10 million. The reason it was three was because Suo Jia's talent in control meant he could eat exactly four to complete an energy level. Eating any more after that wouldn't have any effect.

Although Suo Jia looked to have a lot of money, he'd already spent 30 million on three fruits. On the Greater Trade Routes, these things that could boost a human's strength would definitely be treasured, so they were astronomically expensive.

Suo Jia loaded a large quantity of cryolite from Icebound City and steered the Diamond Dragon to quickly rush over to the next city. In the next 3 months, Suo Jia had to earn the credentials from seven other cities, an extremely difficult task.

Soon after, the path in front of them was once again blocked by magical beasts. Seeing the magical beasts glare at them like tigers hunting down prey, Suo Jia quickly raised his right hand and instantly activated Hailstone!

Following Suo Jia's actions, the 30 or so Golden Wind Lions leapt up into the air. Suddenly, a flood of blue light surged outwards, and in the next instant...thousands of Ice Arrows pierced through the sky and descended, aiming at the Golden Wind Lions on the ground below.

Under such concentrated fire, the Golden Wind Lions all had their Life Protections broken after being pierced by the Ice Arrows, and they fell into a pool of blood before Suo Jia had even gotten near. The Diamond Dragon just casually stepped on the carcasses and continued to fly forwards at full speed.

While comfortably leaning back on the Sealed Ice Throne on the Diamond Dragon's head, Suo Jia didn't actually rest. He pulled out magic automaton Baltic from his interspatial ring and began to modify it. This entire time, Suo Jia hadn't once stopped making magic automaton toys. That was because....Suo Jia had already

reached a very high level in the the art of magic automaton creation.

Baltic's composition was very simple, and could be said to just be a skeleton. It couldn't possibly go wrong. When the Thousand Year Sandworm's skin was split apart, one would see a human skeleton-like automaton frame. Suo Jia's next step was to give the automaton moving parts.

These moving parts were just like a human's tendons. A single pull would be enough for all of Baltic's limbs to move and follow any action. This was something Suo Jia didn't need to personally invent. The structure of the magic automaton was really just the same as a human's tendons and muscles, and couldn't just be randomly changed.

Using the toughest Earth Dragon's tendons, Suo Jia completed the layout of the main muscular system. According to records, Suo Jia continued to run tests. After verifying that each muscle could function as intended, he finally stopped.

Next, Suo Jia needed to make alterations. Baltic had four legs, which was for the sake of stably pulling a cart. But that wasn't very appropriate now. Although the four legs were stable, they lacked agility, and the muscles couldn't be laid out! No human had four legs.

The modifications were very simple; Suo Jia connected muscles to two of the legs, and pulled the other two legs upwards to its back and formed a pair of mechanical wings. Although these mechanical wings couldn't move, they granted the magic automaton the ability to glide through the air.

After the alterations were made, Suo Jia began to ponder in satisfaction. Generally speaking, Baltic's current state already possessed a perfectly functional steel framework. However...he now had something like a pair of mechanical wings to glide through the air!

Since gliding was necessary, the wings were wide and very long. Although they were securely fastened on Baltic's back, the wings could naturally fold themselves in front and form a storable, upper set of armor.

When the mechanical wings were spread open, they'd extend outwards from a spot on its back. From the air, it seemed like a glider. Although it wasn't confirmed how far it could glide for, everything would be fine with more modifications.

Of course, the function of these mechanical wings wasn't just to glide. The front ends of the wings had been whetted so that they were abnormally sharp, and even had teeth. When Baltic quickly flew out of a crowd, it could open its wings, and slice enemies on either side of it into halves, like the death god using its scythe.

After that, Suo Jia inputted all of a warrior's basic battle skills into the magical beast monster core. Once the sequence was properly set, the magic automaton could activate all warrior battle skills according to a specific order. Unfortunately...Baltic still couldn't enter a battle. Baltic, which only knew how to stick exactly to one sequence of battle movements, didn't have any actual combat ability.

Chapter 334 – Various Remarkable Abilities

There were a total of two paths in front of Suo Jia. One was like before, when Suo Jia had gained those magic automatons, and design Baltic like a magic automaton with a combat mechanism. The advantage to this was that within a designated area, Baltic could fight with pretty much no slip-ups. The downside was that once it left the designated area, Baltic would become a pile of scrap metal.

This designated area was actually a place with mechanisms laid out. These mechanisms determined Baltic's movements. In other words, if it was to engage into combat, the mechanisms need to first be installed before it actually started fighting.

If used as defense, this first method was pretty good. However, if the goal was to move around to fight, this method was a joke. How could an enemy give one hours to fight within that specific area?

The other method was autonomous. This so-called autonomous mode was embedding a magic beast egg's consciousness into the power-generating core, and then using the consciousness within the egg to control the entire magic automaton.

This power-generating core was actually a six-pointed star array. Each of its points had water, fire, wind, light, and dark type crystals embedded. The magical beast egg was set outside the core. This way, the consciousness within the automaton would be able to control the energies within all six crystals. This would be used to drive, attack, or defend with the magic automaton.

At the moment, Suo Jia only had an earth magic core. This belonged to the Thousand Year Sandworm. Currently speaking, all of Baltic was relying on just this earth elemental magic core to drive it. This magic automaton was simply a toy that could move around.

Suo Jia shook his head in disappointment and gave up on this

thought. He pulled out various ores and materials from his interspatial ring and began to smelt them in his alchemy furnace. Those ores and materials that could be made into Epic-ranked magic equipment outside the Greater Trade Routes could be used to make Baltic's body.

Although it seemed like a waste, it actually wasn't at all. If Suo Jia wanted to use them again, all he had to do was knock a piece off of Baltic. Nothing was wasted.

During the following three months, Suo Jia continued passing through various cities as he modified Baltic, and finally...after the third month, Suo Jia's control ability had reached the third level. The Diamond Dragon's freezing ability had pretty much completed the first level as well. At this point, the Diamond Dragon could already maintain its Diamond state for an hour.

As for Baltic, he'd already been completely changed. Suo Jia had exhausted all of his precious ores and materials worth millions before finally refining its frame so that its indestructibility level was the same as diamond's. After three months of planning, Suo Jia had also decided that Baltic would be shaped into an autonomous combat automaton.

Three months later, Suo Jia rushed back to Enchanting Village. The reason he was returning to that place was because, back then, he and his party members had agreed to gather here. Today was the time they'd decided to meet again.

Suo Jia leisurely sat inside the inn, lightly sipping a cup of red wine. His anxious gaze constantly swept back to the door. Although they hadn't known each other for long, Suo Jia had discovered that he'd already started missing them.

"Oi! Brat...get out of my way immediately! This is specifically meant for the amazing me to use!" Just as Suo Jia was scanning the doorway, an arrogant voice sounded from next to Suo Jia's ear.

Suo Jia slightly turned his head to look towards the sound. A tall

and sturdy, gorilla-like warrior over 2 meters tall was carrying a large sword on his back and coldly staring at Suo Jia.

Suo Jia helplessly shrugged and stood up to sit at an adjacent table. While others might've thought that Suo Jia would be annoyed, after experiencing the adventurer's way of life for so long, Suo Jia was no longer a young and inexperienced child. Although he was a week away from becoming 17 years old, Suo Jia's experience as an adventurer was already incomparably plentiful.

Was Suo Jia fierce? That's right...Suo Jia was definitely pretty fierce. If one became his enemy, they wouldn't even be able to dream of remaining alive. However...Suo Jia definitely wouldn't classify the opposite party as a great archnemesis just because of one sentence. If he got angry so easily, how could he become an expert?

Seeing Suo Jia unexpectedly shift to the side obediently, the tall and sturdy warrior tsked in disdain, and called his five companions to come sit down. They then ordered a large barrel of wine and began to heartily drink it.

Suo Jia couldn't help but furrow his brows at the world-shaking shouts from the table next to him. Although there was no lack of clamor in the inn, something this loud was too noisy after all, and made anyone feel uncomfortable.

"Creak..." As Suo Jia was secretly casting sidelong glances of indignation, a sound rang out from the doorway. Suo Jia excitedly turned around to look and saw Roger dumbly standing at the entrance, his eyes searching the inside of the inn. It was clear to see that he was looking for Suo Jia.

"Here!" Suo Jia abruptly stood up and waved over Roger with a shout.

Hearing Suo Jia's voice, Roger immediately turned his head. The instant he saw Suo Jia, Roger's eyes flashed with a keen glow.

Seeing how piercing his gaze was, Suo Jia couldn't help but inwardly feel happy. They'd been apart for only a bit more than half a year, but it looked like this guy's strength had increased by quite a bit!

Roger speedily arrived at Suo Jia's side and plopped down in the seat next to him. He chuckled, "Boss, it's been over half a year since we last met. You've been doing fine recently, right?"

Suo Jia nodded with a smile as he surveyed Roger while praising him, "Yea...I'm fine. However, I can't seem to compare to you. Your strength improved really quickly. Tell me, how did you spend this half a year or so?"

In response, Roger opened his mouth, just about to reply. But just then, that thick and sturdy warrior suddenly shouted out loud, "AHAHAHAHA....come, come, come, let's cheer!"

Seeing the opposite party act without the slightest restraint, Roger couldn't help but knit his brows together, his face turning darker. He turned around to say to the people at the next table, "Lower your voices a bit. You've already started to disturb us with your noise!"

"Hm?" That thick and sturdy warrior stood up in anger and furiously shouted, "You brat....you seem to have complaints about me?!" As he spoke, he stretched his hand out to grab the large sword leaning against a wall.

Seeing the warrior act so unbridled, Roger couldn't help but explode in anger. With an abrupt burst of force, he prepared to stand up and start a fight. Since someone wanted to die, then Roger had no qualms about sending them there!

Seeing Roger's movements, Suo Jia suddenly reached out his hand to grab Roger. As Roger looked back at Suo Jia in confusion, Suo Jia only lightly shook his head, gesturing at him not to act.

After shooting a hateful glare at the thick and solid warrior,

Roger powerlessly say down. No matter what, he still needed to listen to Boss's words, even if he wasn't happy with it.

Seeing that Roger seemed to have given in, the thick and solid warrior couldn't help but laugh out loud. "And here I'd thought a real man had arrived. I hadn't imagined that it'd just be a useless scoundrel." While speaking, the thick and solid warrior loosened his grip on his greatsword, sat back down, grabbed the cup of wine, and began to make a loud racket once more.

Roger shook as he lowered his head and gloomily stated, "Boss, why won't you let me deal with them? There's no one that can humiliate me, Roger, like this!"

Suo Jia smiled and calmly replied, "Roger, although you've improved a lot this past half a year, it currently looks like your mental state seems to be far from enough. If something so minor baits your murderous intent, you are still very far from becoming an expert."

Chapter 335 – Various Remarkable Abilities

Pt. 2

“Eh!” Roger couldn’t help but start at Suo Jia’s words. He then lowered his head while pondering what Suo Jia had said. That’s right....a true expert would be able to maintain their mental state like water at any point in time. How could they allow waves to easily billow up? Although that guy’s words were annoying, it wasn’t enough to induce great waves in a person that had cultivated their state of mind to a high enough level. Besides, on what basis could that guy judge if Roger was a coward or not?

“Bang!” Just as Roger was thinking this, a fierce slam rang out. A tall and straight figure proudly appeared there, and after a few glances around, walked over to Suo Jia and Roger with large strides. A wide cloak fluttered in the air behind him as he approached them, rustling in the wind.

Seeing the quickly approaching figure, Suo Jia and Roger stood up excitedly. That’s right...the person that had arrived was none other than their companion that they hadn’t seen in half a year: Xiang Yun!

At the sight of Xiang Yun, who was now even more elegant than before, Suo Jia and Roger couldn’t help but each punch Xiang Yun in the chest with a fist. Xiang Yun didn’t purposely dodge, and instead faced their strikes head-on with a large smile on his face. “Both of you guys came so early, I’d thought that I’d be the first to arrive.”

After they all sat back down, Suo Jia smiled and sighed in admiration as he looked at Xiang Yun and said, “You rascal, you didn’t even look at what time it is, and you still thought you’d be the first to arrive. I’ve already been here for over an hour!”

As soon as Suo Jia finished speaking, that thick and sturdy warrior at the table next to them spat at them in disdain, “Hmph!

You're even wearing such a large cloak...f*cking hell...you must really think of yourself as some chivalrous hero! I think it'd be more accurate to call you a shrimp instead." (TL: This is a pun. Chivalrous hero = 大侠 (da xia), which shares the same phonetics as 大虾 = shrimp)

"Hahahaha...." In coordination, the warrior's five companions all laughed heartily, their laughter filled with contempt and derision.

Even idiots would know who these guys were talking to. After all...in the entire inn, it seemed as if only Xiang Yun was wearing such a large cloak. Moreover, he was the closest one to these guys, and he'd also just entered.

In response to the ridicule, Xiang Yun smoothly picked up a cup and poured himself plenty of wine as if he hadn't heard them at all. After lifting his head to finish it, he lazily looked at Roger and said, "You scoundrel, you're not bad. If I hadn't trained with my life, you might've really caught up with me."

In the past, Roger definitely would've jumped up at these words and begun arguing without restraint. However...Xiang Yun's performance just now already completely proved that, at the very least, in terms of training one's mental state, Roger was inferior to Xiang Yun!

Roger tightly clenched his teeth and ground out in a low voice, "Just wait and watch. There will definitely come a day when I'll catch up to you, and even surpass you!"

"Hm?" Xiang Yun couldn't help but furrow his brows at this, and tentatively stretched his hand out to touch Roger's forehead. He then asked in confusion, "You're not hot? It doesn't seem like a fever, unless...you overtrained to the point where you broke your mind?"

"Screw you..." Seeing Xiang Yun's serious act, Roger grumpily pushed away Xiang Yun's hand and moodily mumbled, "F*ck, in

these past years, I've only been focusing on hammering battle skills into myself, and forgot to train my mental state. That's why...I have to admit now that I've already fallen behind you. However, you should watch out; I'll soon catch up."

"Mmm..." Seeing how earnest Roger was, Xiang Yun nodded and replied, "That's right. Actually, I noticed as soon as I met you that, although your aura has become much sharper, you're still too exposed. Look at Captain, do you see any aura to speak of around any part of his body?"

Roger couldn't help but turn to look at Suo Jia, and watch as Suo Jia serenely sipped some tea. He then smiled at Roger and said, "Although one's mental state seems worthless and unuseful in any way, there is a point that is for certain: People with more skilled mindsets will always defeat people with weaker mindsets. As for the reasons behind it, they can be felt intuitively, but cannot be conveyed with words!"

"Haha..." Xiang Yun laughed and replied with a nod, "Actually, it can be vaguely described. Those with stronger mental states are always extremely calm; they can always make the most correct choice at the most appropriate moment. In front of those with weaker mental states, they would never make any mistakes. However, in the reverse situation, those with weaker mental states will always expose openings, vulnerable points that lead to their defeat!"

Suo Jia nodded as well, and he gently placed his cup down on the table. Then...he turned around and looked at the only seat empty on his right side. "In terms of cultivating one's mindset, I'm sure Nicole has a greater right of speech, right, beloved young Miss Nicole?"

"Haha..." A chime-like laugh rang out in response as Nicole's body faded into appearance on the empty seat. At the moment... she was lazily resting her upper body on the table while looking at everyone with a happy expression.

“You!” Roger stared at Nicole in shock and said almost fearfully, “My God! When did you get here? Why didn’t I sense it at all?”

“Haha...” Suo Jia chuckled and calmly said to Roger, “This is where the usefulness of one’s mental state lies. A skilled mindset is like water, like a mirror, that can at any point reflect everything around it. On the other hand, you...have always been too impatient. That’s why, even if Nicole purposely exposed any of her vulnerable spots, you still wouldn’t notice them.”

“Yea...” Xiang Yun continued, “In reality, you should’ve been able to sense Nicole when she was sprawled across the table. I only discovered that Nicole because I’d sensed the energy coming off of the table.”

With a gleeful smirk, Nicole proudly stated, “That’s right. If I didn’t purposely reveal any openings, there’d no way anyone could break through my stealth!”

In response to Nicole’s bragging, Suo Jia indifferently picked up his cup, took a light sip, and intoned back, “Nicole, the next time you go under stealth, you must make sure to control your emotions. When you circled around me from the back earlier, I could hear your heartbeat!”

Nicole couldn’t help but flush in embarrassment and mutter, “What, it’s been ages since we have seen each other. Being able to suddenly meet again just makes me excited. If it were anyone else, my heart rate definitely wouldn’t have sped up.”

Suo Jia chuckled and chided, “It wasn’t just your heart beat. You also need to make sure that, aside from when you want to launch an attack, you must not get within 10 meters radius of a target. Take me for example, from the flow of the water elements around your body alone, I can already break through your stealth!”

“What?!” Nicole stared at Suo Jia in disbelief and cried, “What did you say? You mean that once I enter the 10 meter radius from your body, you can sense me?”

Suo Jia glanced at Nicole and nodded. “That’s right, the instant you approached the 10 meter radius around me, the water elements around me had already sketched out your figure. Although I couldn’t see you, I could sense you!”

“Heavens!” Nicole exclaimed in astonishment, “That means no thief can ever dream of assassinating you. After all...stealth can’t actually make someone disappear. And once they reach your side, they’ll automatically be sketched out by the water elements everywhere.”

Suo Jia was just about to provide an explanation in response to Nicole’s praise before that thick and sturdy warrior at the next table finally spoke up again. “F*ck, although those cowards aren’t any good, that girl’s body is pretty nice. If I get to drag her up to sleep with me for a night and properly enjoy her, I’d willingly take ten years off my life!”

“Huk!” At the warrior’s unbridled words, Suo Jia, Nicole, and Xiang Yun simultaneously stood up in a burst of fury. Only Roger remained seated at his spot, staring at the three people in confusion. He internally wondered: hadn’t they just talked about how one’s mental state must be like water from beginning to end? How come these guys were so riled up?

“F*ck it!” Seeing Roger remain seated there like a large statue, Nicole shouted out in anger at Roger before she’d even gotten the chance to yell at the thick and sturdy warrior, “What are you doing?! Someone else humiliated your companion, yet you’re still just sitting there. Are you still a man or not?”

Roger couldn’t help but stand up in response with a bitter smile. Mother of...what did this count as? When he’d wanted to get angry earlier, Suo Jia had said he was wrong, but now, sitting there was wrong again? Exactly what actions were the most correct?

Seeing Roger’s confused expression, Suo Jia sinisterly stated, “Roger, we don’t want you to blindly just endure everything. If the

other party's words and actions aren't punishable by death, then there's no need to pay them any mind. But if their words and actions cannot be forgiven, we don't need to blindly excuse them. If they want to die but worry about there not being any ghosts to drag them to their deaths, then we can just do it for them!"

Chapter 336 – Beheading Fruit Pt. 1

Suo Jia turned around and frostily glared at the warrior before saying in a low voice, “You’ve provoked us again and again. We aren’t as experienced and knowledgeable as you, but I hadn’t imagined that you’d interpret our forbearance as weakness. You dare to say such blasphemous words? Don’t tell me that you don’t know that taking liberties with our female party member will be committing a crime deserving death?”

“Hahahaha...” The thick and sturdy warrior suddenly lifted his head up and laughed loudly. This whole time, he had indeed been looking at Suo Jia’s patience as weakness. Why would a skilled person need to endure this?

The warrior grabbed his greatsword by the hilt and said with an extremely flushed face, “Yea...I just happened to have drunken to my high. Since you’re unwilling to accept this, then let’s just contest against each other with real weapons!”

Hearing their boss’s words, the warrior’s other 5 companions also rose up, glaring fiercely at Suo Jia’s party. Many bad remarks had been exchanged, inciting an imposing air that gave the feeling that people would just start pulling out their blades and stabbing each other.

Confronting each other like this, Suo Jia smiled and turned around to head towards the door. As he walked, he declared in a low tone, “If you want to die, don’t worry about there being no ghosts around to do it for you. If you have the guts, come out with me!”

At this, Xiang Yun, Roger, and Nicole couldn’t help but chuckle darkly, and follow behind Suo Jia to leave the inn. At the same time, the thick and solid warrior laughed carefreely as he hefted his greatsword and walked outside with his companions as well.

Seeing this, the inn became calm at first, but then all the people

inside all fought to stand up first. Since ancient times, people have always been fond of noise and excitement. It seemed to be a common enjoyment all people shared. If there was something interesting going on, who would be able to resist going to watch? This was true especially when they were adventurers that liked stirring things up; there was no way they'd let this chance pass by.

These adventurers were not necessarily referring to the adventurers in the profession. In reality, any people with various statuses entering the Greater Trade Routes from the outside was an adventurer according to the indigenous people living in the Greater Trade Routes. To them, the battles between the adventurers were mystical and impossible to imagine.

Suo Jia's group left the inn and rushed to the nearby, small square. After they'd all stopped in their tracks, they turned around to face the opposing six people that had reached the destination as well. At the same time, countless spectators that had heard about the fight rushed over from various directions, fighting each other over the best spots. This was a rare showdown that they could enjoy!

The thick and solid warrior tsked in disdain at the sight of the merchant emblem on Suo Jia's arm. He thought, if a person really did have the skills, why would they enter with the status of a merchant? A thief would be the first choice.

Facing the six opposite people with looks that could kill, Suo Jia seemed to be completely unphased. He turned his head to say to his three companions, "Alright, let's discuss, who will go out and fight?"

As soon as Suo Jia finished speaking, Nicole's eyes immediately lit up and she excitedly said, "The one he humiliated was me, so naturally I should go out and go up against him. Boss, don't worry, no matter what, I'll make him pay back the appropriate price!"

"No!" Roger hurriedly interjected, "Boss, I've already endured for

so long, I really cannot bear it any longer. No matter what, you have to hand these guys over to me to deal with!”

“Tch...” Xiang Yun spat out in contempt and scornfully said, “Weren’t you enduring pretty well just now? They’d pretty much come up to you and pissed on your neck, yet you were able to just sit there as if nothing had happened. It looks to me as if you’re not suited to go out. It’s best if I go instead. This is a contest between us men. As for you, you should just sit on one side and just enjoy the show.”

“You!” Roger’s face couldn’t help change to red and then to white. But before he replied, Xiang Yun had already walked forward and stood in front of those six people. He wagged his finger at them and gave a dark smile, “Let’s not waste any time, all of you just come at me together!”

Suo Jia couldn’t help but furrow his brows at Xiang Yun’s back. Suo Jia knew that from the beginning, Xiang Yun had never been one to give in. From start to finish, he’d always believed that he was the strongest one in the group. Unless one was able to suppress him through martial prowess alone, there was almost no way he’d ever be forced to obey another.

Although Suo Jia was the group leader by name, that was it. From beginning until now, Xiang Yun had always called Suo Jia ‘captain’, and never called him ‘boss’. In Xiang Yun’s eyes, the captain was the captain, and the boss was the boss. Suo Jia may have been the first choice captain, but he was only the second choice boss!

Suo Jia smiled. Although the unfavorable situation before him didn’t seem very well, Suo Jia was still filled with the challenging spirit in this competition situation. Under these ruthless circumstances, everyone had to bring out their all to prevent themselves from being pulled under. If they relaxed even the slightest bit, they’d instantly be flung behind.

Putting Suo Jia's thoughts about this to a side, the thick and sturdy warrior couldn't help but grow furious at the sight of Xiang Yun clearly acting as if everyone else was beneath him. His hands slowly gripped onto the greatsword's hilt as he slowly advanced towards Xiang Yun. At the same time, he said forcefully, "Brat, don't be too condescending. Since you're seeking death, then allow me to escort you there!"

Xiang Yun narrowed his eyes at the ridiculously giant greatsword in the warrior's hand and sneered. He then drew the nearly 2 meter long Holy Crossblade from his back, and he smiled coldly at the slowly approaching warrior.

Finally, the two people's bodies stopped when they were about 10 meters away from each other. For a moment, an invisible yet imposing aura fiercely swept outwards from their persons.

Their confrontation seemed to both last forever, and only for a mere instant. Just as everyone was beginning to lose their focus, the two simultaneously began to go at it against each other with their all.

"Clang!" With a violent explosion, all the spectators couldn't help but feel stifled. Although they'd been watching the whole time without turning away, very few people were able to clearly see the two's movements. To most of the observers, the first second was still them just standing there, but the following second was them crashing into each other with all their force. Fiery waves of battle qi burst outwards without restraint from their bodies, dispersing in all directions, causing shattered pieces of rock to fly through the air!

"Clang! Clang! Clang...." They were first desperately deadlocked for a while, up until both of them simultaneously realised that neither of their strengths were enough to completely suppress the other. With this, they pushed off with a burst of force and retreated backwards from each other. Their bodies then charged forwards once more, and the weapons in their hand joined

together again. As they attacked the other party, their power was still unable to overwhelm the other, so they could only start using battle skills to contest against each other.

After directly colliding with each other a few dozen times, they were still unable to defeat one another. Finally....they were unable to avoid crashing into each other with an all-out move. The shock induced by these bitter forces instantly shredded their upper clothes into pieces.

“Whoa!” As their clothes were destroyed, the surrounding spectators couldn’t help but cry out. When they looked over, they saw that Xiang Yun’s build was both slender yet healthy, his muscles sturdy yet aesthetically pleasing. He wasn’t too fat or too skinny. In summary, his stature was proportioned evenly with the golden ratio.

The thick and solid warrior opposite to Xiang Yun was different. At first glance, it didn’t seem at all like a human’s body; it was clearly a giant orangutan’s. That body of muscle was so rugged to the point that it seemed oppressive. Just looking at his muscles was enough for one to conclude that this fellow wasn’t one that could easily be knocked down.

This wasn’t even the most eye-catching part. What made the people most shocked was that the thick and sturdy warrior’s body was filled with criss-crossed wounds of various sizes. From their appearance, it seemed as if they’d been caused by a wild beast’s sharp claws. This sight proved that this guy’s battle experience was definitely something that a typical person couldn’t even imagine.

The warrior’s gaze locked onto Xiang Yun. He finally showed a cruel smile as he intoned in a deep voice, “Very interesting, really very interesting. Such a flimsy body, yet able to produce such powerful strength. This is really a pleasant surprise, to think that it was like this!”

He’d only finished half his words before the warrior’s expression

became serious. Both his hands simultaneously gripped the hilt of his greatsword as he wildly roared out, “Brat, have a taste of my power from the Berserk Fruits—Brute Frenzy!”

“Chi...” Following the warrior’s words, a violent shrieking sound pierced the air as a scarlet fog instantly perfused out from the warrior. At the same time, a powerful, indescribable pressure flowed out from his body.

Chapter 337 – Beheading Fruit Pt. 2

“Hyah!” The burly warrior activated his wild transformation ability, and his entire body practically changed into a body as undefeatable as a Mengma beast’s. With a scarlet aura, that incomparably large sword seemed to as weightless as a rice straw. However...nobody really believed that it was so light. This was clear to see just by Xiang Yun’s troubled stance.

Before the wild beast transformation had been activated, Xiang Yun could’ve tied the opponent in a battle. But now that the transformation was completed, Xiang Yun was absolutely unable to resist against the opponent’s violent and explosive attacks.

Following the sound of a fierce collision, Xiang Yuns’ body was continuously bent in different ways by the robust warrior’s attacks, like a small blade of grass in the wind. After a full-power sweep from the warrior, Xiang Yun’s body was blasted outwards a dozen of meters before he finally stood back up with difficulty.

Drenched in sweat, Xiang Yun looked at the opposite warrior that seemed to be made of indestructible diamond. He wiped the sweat off his forehead and uttered in a low voice, “It looks like...coming to these Greater Trade Routes was indeed the correct decision. Without using the fruits’ power, there’s no way one can defeat another fruit user!”

With a low groan, Xiang Yun slowly straightened his body. His right hand shook, and the 2 meter long Holy Cross Blade in his hand instantly let out an indistinct, piercing glow. At the same time, Xiang Yun said with a smile that wasn’t really a smile, “Since you’ve already put the fruits’ power into use, I won’t hold back. Come...Beheading Fruit’s power: Slash!”

At Xiang Yun’s words, the robust warrior couldn’t help but feel slight shock. But without letting him think much, Xiang Yun had already abruptly leaned forward and charged, the Holy Cross Blade

in his hand pelting down in a chop.

The burly warrior couldn't just take Xiang Yun's full-strength slash lying down. He tightly gripped the hilt of his large blade, and his body spun a few times. The blade lit up and burned the heavens as it borrowed the body's centrifugal force and whizzed downwards to meet Xiang Yun's war blade.

"Clang!" Xiang Yun's extremely violent attack instantly broke the incomparably large sword. The power of his blade didn't diminish at all, and with another wild chop, a crimson flash shot out in all directions. The warrior's face was filled with disbelief as he slowly fell down, crimson blood spurting out of his chest.

With a heavy stagger, Xiang Yun's throat was agitated and... scarlet blood came spraying out of his mouth. In terms of pure strength, Xiang Yun wasn't the same level as his opponent. Although he'd use the power of the slash to meet the opponent's attack, the shock from the strength of the opponent's sword had still injured him.

Wiping the traces of blood at the corners of his mouth, Xiang Yun abruptly raised his head and laughed out loud. Although this fight hadn't been easy...the Beheading Fruit's might was already undoubtedly clear!

While he was laughing, a figure suddenly charged outwards at full speed from amidst the rugged warrior's five companions. The large sword in his hand whizzed down at Xiang Yun.

Seeing this, Xiang Yun couldn't help but freeze for a moment. Although the final victor of the battle had been him just now, he was already spent, completely unable to continue fighting.

Seeing that Xiang Yun was about to be injured by the opposite party...a mirage-like figure instantly appeared in front of him. With a precisely aimed kick of the right foot, the opposite party's large sword was instantly struck.

“Bang!” Under the fierce attack, the guy that had attempted a sneak attack could only feel the weight in his hands lighten as the large sword was shattered into thousands of pieces by that kick. Without waiting to let him realize what had happened, the guy that had intercepted the sneak attack just then spun like a phantom, and his left foot instantly kicked at the opposite party’s chest.

Seeing this, the opponent didn’t dare be careless. The power of this guy’s foot couldn’t possibly be small; it had even turned the hard sword just now into powder with a single kick. If this attack landed on a person’s body, how could they end well? Thinking this, the opponent immediately drew back.

That’s right, the interceptor that had appeared just now was Roger. The reason he’d been able to break the opposite party’s large sword with a kick just now was mainly due to Suo Jia’s contribution. The strongest ability the combat boots that Roger wore was turning things into powder. As long as the opposite material wasn’t as hard as the combat boots, and the force of the collision was great enough, the opposite party’s weapons would definitely shatter. If a human body was hit, their skin would tear open and their bones would break; moreover, there was absolutely no way they’d be able to escape.

Seeing the opposite party try to escape from his feet, Roger couldn’t help but give a smirk of disdain. Roger didn’t dare boast about other things, but in terms of leg speed, Roger had nothing to fear. Even Nicole couldn’t beat the abnormal Roger in terms of purely movement speed. Nicole’s speed was more focused on attack, not movement.

With a swift stamp of his legs, Roger instantly closed the distance between the two, and his legs kicked out right after each other. Finally...that despicable fellow that had attempted to pull a sneak attack couldn’t continue dodging, and was accurately blasted onto the chest by three of Roger’s attacks in succession. By the time this

guy's corpse had fallen back amidst his group of companions, his entire chest had already sunken inwards, and he'd completely died.

Lightly rubbing his nose, Roger arrogantly stood in place as he provokingly curled his finger at the remaining four people. "Come, come, come, who is next?"

The opposite party was clearly not frightened by the sight just now. A youth wearing graceful warrior clothing with a sword at his waist calmly walked out, his expression indifferent as he stood before Roger.

"Clang!" Facing Roger, the youth elegantly stretched his hand out and drew the sword at his waist like a fencer. The next instant...a two-finger wide but 1.2 meter long and narrow tapered sword appeared before everyone.

"That's..." Roger couldn't help but furrow his brows at the sight. Strictly speaking, this kind of sword should be called a stinger. With its thin and narrow blade, this kind of blade only had a single edge to maintain its hardness. Its attacks mainly remained on stabs, with pares as support. It was an extremely swift and nimble type of weapon.

Typically speaking, many fencers in the western world enjoyed using this kind of blade. Although it looked narrow and skinny, it was extremely terrifying, to the point where it induced headaches in others. This kind of blade was the fastest blade in the entire world. In terms of stabs alone, there was no sword that could move as quickly as this one.

A fencer using this kind of blade had only two methods of attack. The first was the passive attack, where neither the enemy nor the user moved. If the enemy moved, the user would move first, and pierce through the enemy with a single attack.

The second method of attack was the active attack. Using the incomparably fast thrusting speed, the blade could instantly stab

out dozens of times. If only a single attack was blocked, the opponent would be instantly pierced through. As for evading...this kind of sword-play was impossible to dodge. At most, one could only block.

Although Roger's legs were indeed very fast, the legs could never be as fast as the hands. Even the most normal jabbing fists would be faster than the fastest kick of the leg. It could be said that the young warrior only dared to walk out because he'd seen that his battle skills could subdue Roger!

The youth faced opposite of Roger and he stabbed his narrow sword forward once, before holding it vertically in front of him. He displayed an extremely elegant and unrestrained stance, his eyes focused on Roger. He unexpectedly wanted to wait for the first attack!

Seeing this, Roger couldn't help but grit his teeth. Although he'd never encountered this kind of opponent before, Roger wouldn't retreat. He had absolute confidence in his own legs! After thinking for a bit, Roger lightly jumped up from his place. By attacking first, he'd set the rhythm of the battle.

Seeing that Roger had already entered the combat state, the young warrior naturally became serious. With a wave of the narrow blade in his hand, he lowered it at an incline forwards. At the same time, the young warrior's legs bent slightly, and he placed one leg in front and one in back, adopting a T-shape. He lowered his center of mass, his upper body stooping forwards, while the other hand was raised at an incline from behind, maintaining his body's balance.

Xiang Yun, who'd already retreated back into his group of comrades, furrowed his brows and said in a low voice, "Not good, this is the prevalent Western sword-play called fencing. Its speed is abnormally and incomparably fast. Roger will most likely be at a disadvantage!"

Chapter 338 – So Powerful Pt. 1

“Clang!” After adjusting his rhythm, Roger suddenly leapt forwards. His feet strode ahead in a chain of steps and he charged at the young warrior opposite him like lightning. At the same time, a bang echoed out as the narrow sword in the young warrior’s hand suddenly flashed brightly. Then...his body shifted forwards like a mirage, and the narrow sword in his hand instantly shook to form fancy sword patterns.

“Shishishi...” Three fell swoops of the sword, as swift as if they were one, formed a misty sword mirage, making it impossible to know where the sword’s real body was.

Roger’s actions couldn’t be said to be slow, but in everyone’s eyes, the instant the young warrior unsheathed his sword, Roger seemed as if he’d frozen in mid-air. The sword mirage, like a slithering, agile serpent, instantly weaved in and out of the right leg he’d just kicked out three times, and each sword sharply pierced through the muscles of Roger’s calf.

“Plop...” Following the end of the attack, the young warrior also nimbly retreated to outside 5 meters radius and was looking at Roger with a relaxed expression. To him, it looked as if his victory in this competition was already certain.

In that case, why didn’t the young warrior continue attacking? Actually, it wasn’t that the young warrior didn’t want to continue attacking, but that the burst of strength earlier had just been the completion of one set of attacks.

Suo Jia couldn’t help but inwardly sigh in admiration at the sight of such an insane scene. It wasn’t like he’d never encountered other adventurers before, but in his memories, Suo Jia hadn’t ever felt that any adventurers were much stronger than magical beasts. They were all just trash that would be slaughtered before Suo Jia.

But while watching today’s fights, Suo Jia suddenly realized just

how overpowered the strengths of these adventurers were. Even Xiang Yun and Roger couldn't stably secure victory! Without paying out a certain price, one would only lose.

Suo Jia shook his head and sighed in praise. Were the adventurers that Suo Jia had encountered just too weak? No...that wasn't possible. There were no such things as weak adventurers. The reason that those before Suo Jia had collapsed at one blow was really just because Suo Jia's luck was too good.

Mages were just that type of occupation. Regardless of how powerful one was, the mage would be able to use overpowered attacks once they managed to put some distance, instantly causing the other party to die on the spot. Recalling the fight Suo Jia had back then with the adventurers, when had there been any chance for the adventurers to display their own strengths?

Those fire arts had been directly blasted away by Suo Jia's Ice Roar. In that battle between mages, the fire elemental mage definitely would've lost. Suo Jia was wearing the Atlantis set after all, and it allowed him to instantly activate all ice magics. In addition, Suo Jia's spirit power and magic power far surpassed his opponent's, so it'd be stranger if he hadn't won.

As for those four warriors, they'd been pretty doomed. One had been struck by the Diamond Dragon's tail and then stomped to death, another had been eaten alive by the Diamond Dragon, while the last two had been smashed to death by the Diamond Dragon's natural descent from the sky. From beginning to end, the four warriors hadn't been any form of threat to Suo Jia.

In reality, as an ice elemental mage, Suo Jia mainly relied on control. Once his effective ice magics restricted his enemy's movements and attacks, the Diamond Dragon could use its unrivaled physical attacks and deadly might. In reality, aside from that miserable fire mage, the other four warriors had all lost to the Diamond Dragon.

The mage was a frightening occupation. As long as they were able to maintain their distance, any warrior, no matter how strong, would still lose to them. Even if the warrior was strong enough to overturn the heavens, they wouldn't be able to alter this reality. But once a mage got close, a mage of any level of power would miserably die to a normal warrior's hands. Generally speaking, mages were the kings of long ranged fights and they were useless in close combat! It was the occupation with the greatest difference between strengths and weaknesses

Roger slowly stood up from the ground. Blood quickly flowed down his calf and soon gathered in a small pool at his feet.

With his head lowered, Roger coldly stated, "Brat, you're really despicable, you know? You dared to sneakily activate the fruit's power in that moment of attack. You..."

"Pfft..." The young warrior sneered in disdain. "Those who win become rulers, and those who lose are reduced to bandits. Nobody said I couldn't use the fruit's power. We aren't competing in martial arts, you know. Rather, this is a fight of life or death. I can only say that you're being too pedantic, too inflexible!"

Roger's whole body began to shake uncontrollably as he spoke in a low voice, "Alright alright, if I'm not wrong, the power you activated is most likely the ability of the Speed Fruit!"

With an arrogant smile, the young warrior opposite Roger nodded and replied, "That's right. I hadn't imagined that someone as old-fashioned and arrogant as you would actually know of the Speed Fruit. This is an Earth-level fruit, you know!"

Roger slowly straightened his body. His eyes slowly began to turn red, and the expression on his face quickly changed. Seeing this, Nicole told Suo Jia in concern, "Young Master, Roger's state doesn't seem quite right. I'll go out and switch him instead. That guy is controlling Roger, so if I go restrain him and make my move, I'll definitely be able to get rid of him in a flash!"

Suo Jia glanced at her, knowing that her words were true. Candidates of the speed-type had to have flexible bodies and have their defenses inevitably lowered in their pursuit of speed. This kind of opponent was a piece of cake to Nicole; she could defeat them whenever she wanted. Although in terms of single-attack speeds, a sword attack was indeed fast, it couldn't possibly surpass the speed of the world's first Instant Kill – Revised!

However, while this was all said, Suo Jia still held Nicole back. Staring fixedly at Roger's upright figure, Suo Jia said in a heavy voice, "No! Nicole...you can't go. This is Roger's fight. Even if he loses here, we cannot act. Otherwise, it will be extremely detrimental to his mental growth. Moreover...if he can't even pass this point, he'll feel fear before even fighting any other person in the future becoming an obstacle that he will never be able to surmount!"

Xiang Yun's body shuddered and he gaped at Suo Jia in shock. At the same time, Nicole urged, "But Young Master, we can't just keep..."

Before Nicole could finish speaking, Xiang Yun interrupted lowly, "Nicole, there's no need to continue speaking. Captain is right, this battle has to be ended by Roger, regardless of whether he wins or is defeated. Unless he loses the entire war, nobody can help him. If Roger keeps retreating before the battle even starts, he'll never be able to climb up to the peak of martial arts!"

Seeing that both Suo Jia and Xiang Yun were saying this, Nicole calmed down a bit despite the fact that she was still concerned. Together with the two boys, she watched the battlefiled take form.

"Speed Fruits?" Roger murmured, and his eyes flashed in pain as he said in frustration, "Originally, I'd also wanted to use that kind of fruit. However...Nature played with me, and I ended up eating another type of fruit by accident!"

Roger's eyes suddenly brightened, and with an excited

expression, looked at the young warrior opposite him and declared, “Although I don’t have the power of the Speed Fruit, I believe that my fruit’s ability definitely isn’t inferior to anyone else’s!”

With that, Roger’s feet jumped up from the ground again. At the same time, Roger reminisced, “Since you’ve already used the Speed Fruit, then I’ll let you witness the fruit with an extremely similar name—the strength of the Hormone Fruit!” (TL: Speed = Jísù, Hormone = Jīsù)

Following this, a faint, green mist dispersed out from Roger’s body. At the same time, his eyes slowly turned green, and his jumping frequency also increased!

“Speed Fruit? Hormone Fruit?” Suo Jia muttered these two fruits to himself, feeling a bit bewildered. However, he suddenly burst out into laughter. From Roger’s words, Suo Jia had finally been able to understand everything. That guy....had wanted to eat the Speed Fruits, but because the two names were so similar, he’d eaten the Hormone Fruits instead. This was really too hilarious! But what exactly was the difference between the two?

The green mist not only increased the speed of Roger’s jumps, but actually, made his entire body enter a strange state. It was as if he’d added a gear to speed up; his body’s movements were countless times faster than before!

“Yahoo!” Finally, after letting loose an unrestrained shout of happiness, Roger suddenly sprung into action. With a joyful yell, he charged over at the young warrior. In a mere instant, he’d leapt in front of his opponent.

Just as everyone thought Roger would attack at that moment, his body instead whirled around, and he instantly disappeared in front of everyone’s eyes. When he reappeared, he had already reached the young warrior’s side. Then...a foot came smashing towards the young warrior as fast as lightning.

Chapter 339 – So Powerful Pt. 2

The young warrior didn't panic in the face of Roger's attack. Although Roger's attack frequency had increased, as well as his overall speed, his feet couldn't ever be as fast as hands.

The young warrior watched Roger kick towards him and confidently pierced outwards with his sword. With three flourishes, he instantly punctured through Roger's left leg 3 times, and then his body subconsciously retreated.

Roger seemingly didn't even feel this powerful attack, and as the opposite party moved back, Roger's body instantly charged forwards. The opponent was immediately buried in layer upon layer of afterimages of his leg. In terms of movement alone, how could the young warrior outrun Roger, who was widely known for his leg abilities? Moreover, while Roger was charging forwards, the young warrior was walking backwards!

Following Roger's wild attacks, a series of hazy images of a leg filled the space in front of the warrior. The warrior's body didn't have the time to react to the sudden stress from the successive attacks, and his body shook as he was kicked dozens of times in a row. From this, anyone could see exactly what level Roger's attack frequency had reached!

"Hah!" As Roger loudly exhaled, he smashed his leg down with all his strength. The force that had accumulated inside the warrior's body finally exploded outwards, and the young warrior's body was shattered into pieces that scattered all over the area. The sky became filled with flesh and other bits that fluttered slowly onto the ground of the large square.

At first, everyone was dead silent at the sight. But soon after, violent sounds filled the air. Some reacted so extremely that they turned around and began to heavily vomit. This was the first time many people had witnessed such a cruel killing method.

At the sight of Roger standing there like a Death God, the remaining three people on the opposing side couldn't help but begin to tremble. At the same time, as Roger was coldly glaring at those three warriors, his body involuntarily began to sway. Having used up all of the Hormone fruit's energy, he finally felt the pain in his legs, and fell hard onto the ground.

While the Hormone fruit sounded similar to the Speed fruit, its effects weren't the same. Under the Hormone fruit's influence, both attack and movement rates would be exponentially boosted. Moreover, one wouldn't be able to feel pain. Basically, the Hormone fruit allowed one to enter a nearly crazed state.

After noticing Roger's fierce breathing, Suo Jia hurriedly exchanged glances with Nicole, and she then stealthily concealed her body. At the same time, Xiang Yun, who'd already rested for a while, hurriedly ran forwards, prepared to help Roger back.

Seeing this, while the enemy was afraid of the opposing party's strength, both sides realised at this point in battle that this fight could only end when one party was completely eradicated. One had to pull out a weed by its roots, or else the spring wind would bring it back to life. Nobody was willing to leave behind any possible seeds of disaster.

While thinking this, a man with a graceful posture on the opposite side swiftly tore off a slender, green bow from his back. The arrow was mounted on the bow in only an instant, and the tip of the arrow was already quickly locked onto the weakened Roger on the ground.

Seeing that the sharp arrow was just about to leave the bow, a piercing light noiselessly shone from behind the archer, and a silver light ray immediately bore through his chest.

"Tch!" The archer stared down at his chest—which was now wildly spurting out blood—in utter disbelief. He just couldn't figure out how he'd suddenly been hit by a fatal attack!

While the archer was muddled with his thoughts, the mystery was finally solved; Nicole's body silently appeared to his front left. At the moment...Nicole's body was leaning forward, with an unsheathed dagger held outwards in her right hand. It was clear to see that she'd already completed an attack.

Nicole slowly straightened her back and coldly stated, "You can be at ease, Instant Kill Revised, in addition to the combination of Backstab, Critical Attack, and the Piercing fruit's abilities, makes it hard for even a warrior to narrowly escape. If you want to blame something, you should blame yourself for being too careless. If you reincarnate, you must remember that you must not let down your guard at any moment!"

"Plop..." As soon as Nicole finished speaking, the archer finally lost his last sliver of strength, and his corpse fell heavily to the ground with a bang.

"Piercing fruit?" Suo Jia couldn't help but raise his eyebrows in disbelief. This was the first time he'd ever heard of such thing.

Nicole smugly looked at Suo Jia and proudly declared, "How about it? You've never heard of such a fruit, right? Let me tell you...my family's ancestors have all used this fruit. Under the Piercing fruit's effects, the Instant Kill Revised's ability to penetrate objects is improved to the point where it can pierce through any person, ignoring all defenses!"

At this, Suo Jia, Xiang Yun, and Roger couldn't help but all begin to sweat. Nicole's Instant Kill Revised had already been pretty powerful. Now, aside from its threefold attack speed, it was also boosted by the Piercing fruit. Adding a Backstab to Instant Kill Revised was already extremely terrifying in the first place, now that the Piercing fruit abilities were added to it, what kind of defense could ever block Nicole's attack?

Backstab wasn't actually a type of battle skill. In reality, as long as one attacked from behind, it qualified as a backstab. Everyone

knew that an expert would never leave their back open to the enemy. Because of the distinctive traits of human physiology, humans were doomed to have poor perceptiveness for attacks that came from behind them. Defenses also weren't of any use.

Nicole's attack just now had seemed really simple, but it definitely contained something complex. Anyone that encountered this kind of attack would most likely be doomed.

The combination of Instant Kill Revised, Backstab, and the Piercing fruit was already extremely frightening, but Nicole still wasn't satisfied, and had targeted the middle of the archer's back. This made the attack even more critical.

Everyone knew that the composition of a human's physiology made humans more vulnerable. Even a light strike to these vulnerable parts could directly end a person's life, let alone a combination of Instant Kill Revised, Backstab, and the Piercing fruit's powerful attack.

Nicole nodded in satisfaction at the sight of Roger, Xiang Yun, and Suo Jia sweating profusely. She then turned around to look over at the remaining two enemies. Since she'd already gone out, she planned on taking care of the last two people alone!

As Nicole slowly turned around, her body suddenly froze and she shouted, "Everyone, be careful. Their thief has entered the concealed state. Watch out for sneak attacks!" Nicole didn't dare waste any time, and with a flash, her body also disappeared into thin air.

"Yah!" A miserable howl could be heard. Before the opposing thief had executed his sneak attack, Nicole had beat him to it and directly gotten rid of the last member of the enemy side, an earth elemental mage that had just raised a Magic Shield.

Although the earth mage had swiftly raised his Earth Shield...any defense was a joke to Nicole. While earth mages were proficient in defense, it didn't seem to make any difference to Nicole. At such

close distance, the opposing mage hadn't yet gotten any chance to throw out attack magic before he'd tragically died by Nicole's hands.

To be fair, if the mage had managed to pull some distance between him and Nicole, it would've been much harder to determine the victor and loser. However, once Nicole had stealthily arrived at their sides, both mage and archer had no choice but to be sent on the path of death.

After the end of the attack, Nicole once again revealed herself from her stealth state. At that instant...a piercing sound split the air as a brilliant glow instantly flashed from Nicole's side. The bright light burst out and leapt towards Nicole's throat at lightning fast speed...

Chapter 340 – The Reappearance Of The Enemy Traces Pt. 1

Nicole hadn't made any mental preparations for the sudden sneak attack. She'd thought that if the opponent was clever, he'd choose his target to be Roger or Xiang Yun, the people that were temporarily unable to fight anymore, or the mage that was pretty much useless in close combat. She hadn't imagined that the target would ever be her instead!

As she stared at that familiar glow, the reason suddenly dawned on Nicole. That's right...although Nicole knew that Xiang Yun, Roger, and Suo Jia were all extremely powerful, this was something that only she was aware of. The opponent didn't know of this.

From her opponent's point of view, since Xiang Yun and Roger couldn't fight anymore, it would be an easy victory after getting rid of Nicole. As for Suo Jia, he wasn't even considered...thieves never worried about mages.

Entering the stealth state was definitely the safest. Without a warrior's protection, a mage was just trash before a thief; they could harass the mage however they pleased. Since Xiang Yun and Roger were momentarily out of the picture, dealing with Nicole was the easiest path to victory for the opposite party.

After realizing all this, Nicole couldn't help but bite down on her lip. Nicole's attacks were currently exhausted, leaving her in a difficult position before her energy was replenished. However, even though she was attacked first, there was still a three meters distance between them. Before the opponent covered this distance, Nicole could still do some things.

Nicole took a deep breath and narrowed her eyes. Although...she was no longer able to dodge the incoming attack...she could still slightly shift her body down. At the same time, she could also get

into a proper stance.

Instant Kill was a thief's strongest battle skill. Once activated, it would charge at the target with full force. If one couldn't kill their opponent, they would be killed instead. This perfectly described Nicole's current situation.

Thus, the instant the enemy thief activated Instant Kill, the situation became irreversible. Instant Kill was a state in which one's entire mind was focused on an all-out effort to burst out with the fastest attack. The moment Instant Kill was used, it couldn't be stopped.

At the sight of the flashing glow, Nicole used the 0.01s moment to utilize her familiarity with the Instant Kill, and lightly twisted her body a few degrees in that extremely critical moment. At the same time, she slightly retracted the dagger in her hand.

"Che..." There was a sharp whizzing sound as a silver light swept past Nicole's throat. A sinister flash of blood suddenly leapt out from Nicole's throat region. Under the shocked gazes of Suo Jia, Xiang Yun, and Roger, Nicole's hands rose limply like a doll, and the dagger in her hand flew spinning outwards off into the distance.

"Plop..." Finally, Nicole's body heavily crashed onto the ground. Captivatingly scarlet blood instantly soaked the ground beneath her, and quickly spread outwards.

On the other side, the opposite thief had finally stopped moving after finishing this attack, and stood there unmoving with his back facing Suo Jia's group. The only thing moving were the drops of blood dripping down from his dagger!

"Nicole!" After falling into silence for a moment, Suo Jia finally shouted out in shock and quickly charged over towards Nicole, lifting her up without caring about anything else around him...

"Mm..." A tired murmur could be heard as Nicole weakly said,

“Quiet down a bit, I’m really tired right now...”

“Yah!” Suo Jia looked at Nicole in excitement after suddenly realizing that Nicole hadn’t actually died. Although there was a long wound cut across her throat, it clearly hadn’t slashed her arteries. With her experience in Instant Kill, Nicole had managed to shift a millimeter in that extremely critical moment, and avoided getting struck on her neck arteries, narrowly escaping death.

Suo Jia swiftly stretched his hand out and immediately activated a Moisture Technique on Nicole’s neck wound. At the same time, he raised his head to glare at that thief. F***...he’d nearly killed Nicole. This guy definitely couldn’t be excused!

“Hm?” Having decided on his next action, Suo Jia stared in confusion at the thief still blankly standing in his place not too far away, in the same position as before. Suo Jia didn’t understand, since the thief had already attacked, why hadn’t he re-entered the concealed state yet?

As Suo Jia was wondering this, Nicole seemed to have guessed Suo Jia’s train of thought and weakly said, “Don’t bother looking anymore. Just now, his focus had been entirely drawn to the dagger in my hand, and he didn’t notice the loaded arrow concealed in my other hand!”

“Loaded arrow?” Suo Jia looked back at Nicole in confusion.

Feebly sitting up and softly leaning against Suo Jia’s chest, Nicole raised her left hand and rolled up the sleeve slightly to reveal an elaborate device. She said tiredly, “It’s this thing. Didn’t you also get something similar to this in Dawn City?”

“Oh!” Suo Jia suddenly realized as he stared at the device firmly secured to Nicole’s small, left arm. This was actually a loaded arrow like the ones on those crossbows. However, why was this arrow green?

Seeing Suo Jia's expression, and having a decent grasp of Suo Jia's thoughts, Nicole patiently explained, "This is an Epic-ranked equipment passed down my family, a part of the Invisible equipment set: Poisonous Dragon Arrow! You must've heard of this before, right?"

"Poison! Poisonous Dragon Arrow?" Suo Jia couldn't help but stare at Nicole in stupefaction.

The Poisonous Dragon Arrow wasn't just a type of arrow, but a loaded arrow meant to be concealed in a sleeve. This kind of arrow was made from the fur on the corner of the green Poisonous Dragon King's mouth. Although the green Poisonous Dragon King was extremely large, at a height of 20-30 meters...this fur at the corners of its mouth was even finer than a human's strand of hair.

The Poisonous Dragon, which was also called the Green Dragon, relied on the powerfully corrosive acid it spat out from its mouth to attack the enemy. Even the magic-immune Black Dragon King wouldn't be able to negate this poisonous attack. Only the Diamond Dragon could ignore any kind of physical attack like this.

These furs grew on the corners of the Poisonous Dragon's mouth all year round, and were constantly seeped in a poisonous air, soaked in a poisonous liquid. As time passed, this became an incomparably powerful poison. Once it entered the body, it would paralyze the heart and clog all blood pathways. Even if there was an effective antidote, one wouldn't be able to take it quickly enough. Besides...the Poisonous Dragon's poison seemed to be impossible to cure.

Because the fur was extremely fine....even if a Poisonous Dragon's arrow was released, the typical person definitely wouldn't be able to notice it, let alone block or dodge it. Thus...the Poisonous Dragon Arrow was classified as one of the top ten concealed weapons.

Suo Jia soon thought of another problem. In confusion, he asked

Nicole, “Just now, you said that your family seems to pass down the Invisible equipment set?”

Not understanding, Nicole replied, “Yes, don’t tell me that you didn’t know? Invisible refers to my ancestor from the fourth generation family. He’s the world’s first thief to be called invisible!”

“Damn...” Suo Jia clapped a hand on his forehead. This whole time, Suo Jia had only ever heard of the term ‘invisible’, and he’d even carried the Concealment ring [that had invisibility capabilities]*, but he’d never known it was directly related with Nicole’s family.

[*TL Note: This was very vague, so I put the added details in brackets to clarify for those that don’t remember the Concealment Ring]

Suo Jia suddenly looked down and lifted his left hand. “What parts does that Invisible equipment set have? Look here, I have a Concealment ring. Is this part of your Invisible set?”

Without even glancing at Suo Jia’s ring, Nicole bitterly laughed and replied, “Do you really not know, or are you just pretending to not know? If it wasn’t part of the Invisible set, how could it be called the Concealment ring? That’s definitely my ancestor’s ring!”

“Ah!” Suo Jia shot a puzzled look at Nicole and asked, “In that case, why didn’t ask me for it? Don’t tell me that you didn’t know that every piece of an Epic-ranked equipment set emits some energy?”

“That’s...” Nicole hesitantly looked back at Suo Jia and cautiously responded, “I knew that the ring was in your hands, but...the Epic-ranked equipment set is incomparably valuable, and I knew you really needed that ring, so I...”

“Ai...” Suo Jia helplessly sighed and gave a wry smile, “So you thought that I knew you clearly needed the Invisible equipment

set, yet because it was too precious, you thought I couldn't bear to gift it to you. Is that right?"

Nicole lowered her head. Although she didn't reply, it was clear to see that she had indeed believed that. The Concealment ring was an extremely useful magic item that any elemental user could utilize. Nobody would ever give it away to someone else.

Chapter 341 – The Reappearance Of The Enemy Traces Pt. 2

Seeing Nicole remain silent, Suo Jia didn't bother with any further justifications. Instead, he directly stretched his hand out and plucked the Concealment ring off his finger, stuffing it into Nicole's palm. "Everyone's comrades with each other. If there's anything you want to say, just say it straight out. Although this ring is indeed quite amazing, it will only exhibit the true limit of its abilities in your hands."

"You!" Nicole stared at the ring in her palm in astonishment, then raised her head to look back at Suo Jia as she cried out, "You...you're really giving this ring to me?"

Impatiently waving his hand, Suo Jia firmly replied, "I'm not a money-grubbing boss or anything. Since it's something that's meant for you to use, then I naturally have to hand it to you. Moreover, you have to try your best to collect all the other parts of the Invisible equipment set!"

Nicole was extremely touched by Suo Jia's words. This Invisible equipment set wasn't as simple as any other equipment set. Putting aside the Concealment ring's powerful abilities, the significance of the ring to Nicole's family couldn't be compared to just any magic artifact.

Nicole gripped the ring tightly. She knew that this kind of present wasn't something she could refuse. To the later generations of Nicole's family, completing the Invisible equipment set once more was the mission that their ancestor had entrusted them to complete!

As Nicole thought this, she firmly grasped the ring and resolutely declared, "Anyways, I'll take this ring. However...without this ring, what are you going to do?"

With a carefree laugh, Suo Jia pulled his mage robes away to reveal the complete, warrior-armor style Atlantis equipment set. “You don’t need to worry too much about me. Look...what is it that I’m wearing?”

As Nicole scanned the magic equipment on Suo Jia’s body, her mouth unconsciously dropped further and further. Perhaps another person wouldn’t recognize the origin of this equipment set, but to a treasure hunter, it was a joke if they couldn’t recognize the most famous Atlantis equipment set. It was like a maths university student not knowing how to count.

Finally, Nicole’s eyes stopped on the blue circlet around Suo Jia’s forehead. She swallowed hard and said with uncertainty, “Heavens! Don’t tell me that the circlet in your hair contains Atlantis’s Wisdom!”

Without any restraint, Suo Jia held up a thumb at Nicole. Although he hadn’t said any words, he’d already answered Nicole’s question. Seeing Suo Jia’s actions, Nicole couldn’t help but cover her mouth in shock.

Nicole stared blankly at Suo Jia with extremely mixed feelings. According to historical records, anyone that completed an Epic ranked equipment set would become an Epic ranked hero without exception. However...other people would take at least 30-40 years to complete it. There were definitely no other people that had finished gathering the pieces by an age as young as Suo Jia’s. Would Suo Jia become the next Epic ranked hero?

Suo Jia smiled at Nicole’s shocked expression and said, “Alright, alright, now you can finally accept this ring with your mind at ease, right?”

Nicole hesitated for a moment, before resolutely putting the Concealment ring on her finger. With this, she seemed to relax, and she smiled back, “It’s fine anyways. Either way, I made the decision to follow you my entire life back when you saved my

siblings. Since you want to bestow it onto me, I will accept!”

“Mm...” Suo Jia gratefully nodded and said in a satisfied tone, “That’s the way. We’re all together every day and night, so we ought to help each other anyways.”

Nicole nodded and smiled, resolutely declaring, “However, I still won’t just take your thing for free. You’ve already given us too much. Moreover...losing this ring does mean losing a great part of your fighting ability after all. That’s why....no matter what, I must find a magic equipment even stronger than the Concealment ring to give to you!”

Suo Jia just indifferently chuckled in response without trying to dissuade her. He understood well that this was the only way she’d be able to accept the gift contently. Besides, Suo Jia would also be glad to see such events happen in the future.

With Suo Jia’s support, the two of them slowly walked towards Xiang Yun and Roger. Before they’d walked more than a few steps, Suo Jia abruptly froze, and his expression always changed to an unprecedented level of seriousness.

He gently pushed Nicole to a side and said in a low voice, “Nicole, you must get to Roger and Xiang Yun as quickly as possible. The situation unfortunately will most likely change. Hurry!”

Although Nicole didn’t understand what was happening, she followed his words and swiftly walked in the direction of Xiang Yun and Roger. She knew that if she stubbornly stayed behind, she would not only be unable to help Suo Jia, but also burden him.

Suo Jia’s team was a very strange group. There wasn’t an absolute expert. In different situations, each person could be the strongest. In terms of fighting face-to-face, Nicole couldn’t possibly beat Xiang Yun, but if it were another environment that allowed Nicole to secretly assassinate him, Xiang Yun would undoubtedly meet his death.

As for Suo Jia, he seemed to be the weakest with respect to either assassinations or facing people head-on, but once he pulled open a distance between him and the other party, even Xiang Yun, Roger, and Nicole combined wouldn't be enough to deal with Suo Jia.

This was a contradictory team. Everyone had their own strengths, and matched each other extremely well. With their individual strong points, they were able to complement their comrades' weaknesses, and form the strongest team. But among all this, Suo Jia was also the most special.

This was because, while he was a mage, he possessed unique close combat strength. Since the beginning, Suo Jia would never deliberately avoid close combat no matter what. In fact, it was the exact opposite; Suo Jia seemed to always intentionally draw his enemies into close combat.

Nicole quickly returned to Roger's and Xiang Yun's sides. She turned around and anxiously looked back at Suo Jia, who was still standing in his original position. Although they were unable to check out what had happened due to their injuries, the ambience of the air pervading the entire square indicated that there was definitely an enemy!

While Xiang Yun, Nicole, and Roger were observing this, Suo Jia's eyes suddenly lit up, and his right hand stretched out as fast as lightning. A piercing glow flashed, and suddenly shot out at the ground 10 meters in front of Suo Jia, causing a deep crevice to form.

It was clear to see that Suo Jia had missed, but...he seemed to not pay this any mind. His right foot stamped onto the ground, and immediately....rows and layers of diamond-like icicles wildly dispersed outwards into his surroundings.

Finally, under the force of Suo Jia's Diamond Charge, a strange, green figure appeared above the air behind Suo Jia. At that moment...he was waving the sinister dagger in his hand, and was

piercing it downwards through the air towards Suo Jia's back.

“Hmph!” Against this kind of attack, Suo Jia didn't even bother turning around. He arrogantly stood in his place, making it seem like he hadn't discovered that enemy wildly attacking him from the air.

Just as Xiang Yun, Roger, and Nicole couldn't contain themselves from yelling out a warning...a blue ice stream instantly leapt out from the back collar of his clothes. The moment the dagger had arrived before his body, the stream had accurately wrapped itself around the enemy dagger, and then unfurled itself outwards.

Everyone watched as the blue, arm-thick ice stream quickly spun around as if it had sprung to life. In only a few seconds, it had firmly wrapped itself around the green clothed assassin!

Everyone couldn't help but gape dumbly in shock at this bizarre sight. They couldn't fathom at all what had just happened. Where had that ice stream come from? How could it have wormed out from a collar? Moreover, its movements were so swift and precise!

Under everyone's astonished gazes, Suo Jia slowly raised his right hand without even looking at the assassin he'd secured behind him. Immediately...the ice stream wrapped around the assassin emitted a crisp splitting sound. At the same time, the rope-like ice stream began to rapidly contract, tightening its grip.

The assassin was, after all, just an assassin. After tightening only a bit, his Life Protection was completely destroyed. The next moment....under the ice stream's powerful contractive force, captivatingly crimson blood immediately dyed the ice stream a deep red.

Chapter 342 – Extreme Fierceness Pt. 1

“Putong..” Having seemingly sensed that the assassin behind him had already been violently killed, Suo Jia indifferently stretched his right hand out, and the next moment...the ice stream wrapped around the assassin slowly loosened. With a dull thud, the assassin’s corpse heavily fell to the ground. From its abnormal shape, one could tell that all the bones in his body had most likely been completely crushed.

The ice stream that had released the corpse was now dyed crimson from the blood. It began to circle around Suo Jia’s body; at first glance, it seemed like a sinister, blood-red python that was both devastating and horrifying.

“Papapa...” Just then, the sound of a clap rang out, and a bunch of people separated the crowd to walk to the middle of the square. A bald, one-eyed man with a sinister scar on his face leading 8-9 of his lackeys entered the small square, one after another.

After arriving about 20 steps away from Suo Jia, the bald man stopped and glanced at the seven corpses on the ground. Without changing his expression, he said, “Not bad...really not bad at all. I’m surprised that you managed to kill of seven of my underlings, that’s pretty remarkable. However...”

Here, the one-eyed baldie’s expression suddenly changed, and he fiercely declared, “Since you dared to touch the people under me, One-Eyed Bald Dragon, then you have to be prepared to pay the price!”

“Tch...” After hearing these words, Xiang Yun couldn’t help but stand up in a burst of anger, stubbornly leaning on his war blade. He spat out, “F***, in spite of everything, you’re acting so arrogantly? Captain...let me go up and deal with him!”

With a smile, Suo Jia shook his head and replied, “No, no, no... everyone has already taken turns to go up, so....now it’s my turn. If

I can't hold my own against them, then you can go up instead."

Xiang Yun froze for a moment before sitting back down on the ground. In reality, it didn't matter if he or Suo Jia went out, everyone knew that allowing Xiang Yun to go out now was just seeking to be crushed. Although Xiang Yun was mighty, he was injured now, and hadn't had enough time to recover yet. Perhaps he'd still be able to kill off one or two enemies, but in the end, he'd definitely end up being suppressed.

Originally, Suo Jia could've forcibly commanded Xiang Yun to stay out of battle, or allowed him to go out to fight as he wanted and suffer as much as he wanted. However, Suo Jia didn't do either of those. When he'd spoken, he'd also considered Xiang Yun's feelings, and conserved Xiang Yun's reputation and pride. It was also precisely due to this reason that Xiang Yun had no choice but to obediently sit back down.

Suo Jia smiled and nodded at the sight of Xiang Yun sitting back down. Just as he was about to turn around and continue negotiating with the opposite party, Suo Jia suddenly sensed something. His brows furrowed, and his right hand reached out as fast as lightning to instantly activate Ice Roar.

"Yah!" Upon activation, hundreds of ice blades frenziedly shot out from Suo Jia, devastating his surroundings. As the ice blades cut through the air, a blood-curling, inhuman scream mournfully pierced the air.

Following this, a green-clothed thief covered with numerous wounds gradually appeared about 5 meters away from Suo Jia. At the moment...blood was profusely pouring out of this guy's wounds without stopping; it was clear to see that he wouldn't be able to survive.

Suo Jia coldly lifted his right hand once more, and with a flash of blue light, a Mysterious Ice Arrow shot out. It instantly covered the 5 meters distance and pierced through the green-clothed thief's

throat, ending his life and agony.

As he slowly retracted his hand, Suo Jia frigidly glared at One-Eyed Bald Dragon across from him and declared, “Don’t bother dispatching these trash thieves onto me. In my eyes, these kinds of things are completely useless!”

One-Eyed Bald Dragon couldn’t help but be shocked by how powerful Suo Jia was. However, he soon regained his calm, and with a turn of his head, said in contempt, “#3, #4, #5, #6, surround him from both sides. #7 and #8, use your arrows to cover him. #9 and #10, immediately activate your magics, and attack the enemy!”

Following his commands, four warriors immediately pulled out the weapons on their backs and quickly ran along the two sides of the small square to surround Suo Jia. That way, even if Suo Jia activated magic, he could only attack two people at a time. Moreover...the four warriors were so fast that they could dodge the attacks.

“Pfft...” With a laugh, Suo Jia arrogantly reached out and coldly stated, “Since you’ve chosen to become my enemy, then I’m sorry, you must all die in this fight!”

Following his words, a strong, blue light rapidly rushed out from Suo Jia’s hand, and the next instant...the air above the small square flashed brilliantly in the same blue color.

Seeing this, One-Eyed Bald Dragon paused for a moment before throwing his head back and laughing heartily. As he laughed, he loudly shouted, “Everyone, be careful. Since this brat wants to attack us directly, you should all raise your shields. Let this guy witness our Bald Dragon group’s defensive abilities!”

Following this, the two archers and mages, as well as Bald Dragon himself, swiftly put up their Energy Shields. They believed that with the interference of the archers, Suo Jia would definitely be unable to activate magic for long.

“Heh...” While everyone was waiting for more of Suo Jia’s jesting, a blue figure instantly leapt out from behind him. The Diamond Dragon’s body spun 360 degrees in midair, and after suddenly stopping in a certain position, layer after layer of Glacial Armor appeared on its body.

“Boom!” With a fierce bang, the Diamond Dragon’s large body smashed down on the ground before Suo Jia. It not only blocked the shooting trajectories of the archers, but also blocked off the four warriors that were coming in to surround them from the front.

Seeing the huge Diamond Dragon come out, the One-Eyed Bald Dragon couldn’t help but be taken aback, and he urged, “Quick....mages, immediately activate your magic and strike the magical beast’s owner directly!”

The two mages didn’t dare waste any time, and swiftly gathered their magic power in preparation to activate their magic. However...no matter how fast they were, they couldn’t possibly be faster than Suo Jia, who activated magic with a special method. Moreover...with the effects of the Atlantis equipment set, Hailstone could be instantly activated!

Finally...before the opposing mages could attack, Suo Jia’s Hailstone Technique was immediately launched. Sharp Mysterious Ice Arrows rained down from a ball of blue light in the air above the square, piercing towards One-Eyed Bald Dragon and the two archers and mages.

One-Eyed Bald Dragon glanced at the Ice Arrows above, but wasn’t particularly concerned. This kind of attack would need a while to break through the Energy Shields. As a warrior, One-Eyed Bald Dragon could definitely help block the Ice Arrows for the mages; moreover, the two archers could still dodge.

As One-Eyed Bald Dragon was thinking this, the Ice Arrows from above finally began to shoot downwards. The next moment...those

sharp arrows, as if by some influence, suddenly began to move around in random directions, quickly turning around. The first dozen arrows gave up on their original target, and instead raced towards the two mages.

One-Eyed Bald Dragon was stunned for a moment, and he shouted out in horror, “Crap, he’s a control ability user. Quick... mages, give up on attacking and concentrate on defense!”

Without wasting any time, the two mages swiftly dispersed the magic they’d half accumulated already, instead prepared to re-open their Magic Shields.

Suo Jia smiled darkly at this. In reality, although Suo Jia was indeed a control ability user, he had actually just started eating those fruits, and his power wasn’t that strong yet. If One-Eyed Bald Dragon had ignored this, Suo Jia wouldn’t have been able to keep it up for long anyways.

Suo Jia’s feet stamped down, and his body quickly burst upwards and landed on the Diamond Dragon’s left shoulder. The reason he hadn’t landed on the Diamond Dragon’s head was because during battle, landing on the shoulder was more appropriate. Like this, the Diamond Dragon’s claws and its mouth could both protect Suo Jia at any time.

Suo Jia looked at the four warriors coming to surround the Diamond Dragon, then back at the archers that had already locked onto him, and laughed, “Alright, Diamond Dragon, now...it’s showtime!”

Chapter 343 – Extreme Fierceness Pt. 2

Following Suo Jia's words, the Diamond Dragon's legs suddenly bent. The instant the four warriors were charging towards it, it suddenly leapt up. The giant body immediately covered a distance of 20 meters, soaring high up through the air and descending back down towards where One-Eyed Bald Dragon was.

One-Eyed Bald Dragon couldn't help but cry out, and along with the two archers and mages, swiftly dodged. All of them rushed away in various directions; there was no way they could handle a pressure as heavy as this.

When he saw the five people scamper out like mice, Suo Jia couldn't help but sneer. One-Eyed Bald Dragon and the two archers may have been able to evade the Diamond Dragon, but there was no way the two mages could with their movement abilities. Even if they could dodge the Diamond Dragon's attack, they wouldn't be able to evade the following attacks.

As expected, the reality was just as Suo Jia had anticipated. The Diamond Dragon's body slammed into the ground, and at the same time, used the inertia to move forwards. Its body violently wriggled from side to side, its 9 meter long and incomparable thick dragon's tail lashing out piercingly and heavily crashing into the two mages that were unable to evade.

"Snap..." After receiving such strong attacks, it was obvious that the two mages' Life Protections were instantly drained. There was absolutely no need for the Diamond Dragon to continue its rampage. The rain of hail that descended from the skies instantly stabbed into the two mages under Suo Jia's control, turning them into porcupines, killing them completely.

Suo Jia tilted his head upwards slightly, looking at the thousands of arrows raining down from the sky, and he couldn't help but inwardly sigh in admiration. He'd really made the right decision to

use this Control Fruit. After acquiring its energy, Suo Jia could completely place himself amidst his own magic, and control any Magic Arrows shooting towards himself to change directions and go towards the enemy instead.

Everyone watched as Suo Jia and the Diamond Dragon proudly stood in place as the rain of arrows that filled the sky came down towards their heads. However...the moment they reached Suo Jia's head, they would all change directions by some strange force, shooting towards the archers like machine guns.

Suo Jia had considered this before, but the reason One-Eyed Bald Dragon wasn't chosen as a target was because, typically speaking, the leader of a group definitely had the most outstanding strength, and was harder to deal with. What Suo Jia needed to do now was to quickly eliminate the enemies' Life Energies, and then gather all firepower towards the strongest enemy to kill them off.

Against such concentrated attacks, the archers were completely unable to attack back. Even though they tried their best to dodge, Suo Jia's attacks were just too closely packed, and the combination of the air filled with arrows and Suo Jia's control ability allowing him to change the arrows' direction trapped them. They were completely unable to escape the sticky predicament.

Suo Jia gave a cold smirk at the sight of the two archers jumping around wildly like two grasshoppers to dodge. His right hand reached out again, and two Ice Roars burst outwards in succession, the magic completely covering the archers.

Now, the scene had grown chaotic. In that second of their lives left, the archers not only had to rain of ice arrows above them, but also the revolving ice blades flying around on the ground and in midair. This was completely unavoidable; the only solution was defense!

Under everyone's gazes, the two archers' Life Protections seemed to diminish like a flood. Finally...with two mournful cries and

piteous, regretful wails, the two archers' shields shattered, and they met their deaths as their bodies were completely sliced up by the ice blades. Moreover, they were then smashed into pieces by the Ice Arrows. Being alive was something they'd have to wait until their next reincarnation.

Seeing how violent Suo Jia's actions were, One-Eyed Bald Dragon and the remaining four warriors couldn't keep themselves from revealing expressions of fear. It wasn't like they'd never seen powerful experts before, but this was. In fact, their first time seeing strength of this level. Otherwise, they wouldn't have needed to stay at the first checkpoint and bully around others this whole time.

Although One-Eyed Bald Dragon was filled with fear, he knew that at this point, there was already no way they could retreat. Even if he tried to flee, the opponent's flying magical beast would make it so that there was no way he could successfully escape. Even if he had a 10 minute lead, the opposite party would still be able to catch up within a few minutes.

One-Eyed Bald Dragon wildly roared, "Brothers, don't be afraid. This guy has already activated so many magics in succession, his magic power and spirit power must be mostly exhausted by now. Everyone, gather your strength and kill him off!"

The four warriors' eyes all lit up at these words, and they brandished the weapons in their hands before charging together with One-Eyed Bald Dragon towards where Suo Jia was.

Suo Jia looked at the enemies swiftly approaching him with pity. He knew that a pure warrior group would be unable to defeat him. With the Diamond Dragon's protection, they wouldn't even have the privilege of nearing him.

Suo Jia once again activated Hailstone Technique, then reached his hands out to instantly cast 4 Ice Roars in a row so that the four warriors and One-Eyed Bald Dragon were completely trapped in

the magics.

At this, everyone's jaws had dropped open in shock, including One-Eyed Bald Dragon, his four companions, and even the watching Nicole, Xiang Yun, and Roger. They couldn't fathom just how great Suo Jia's magic power and spirit power were. He had only just turned 17, a small brat not even 18 years of age yet. How could he possess such powerful strength!

The cold wind shrieked through the air as the ice blades flew around and the rain of arrows pelted downwards. One-Eyed Bald Dragon and his four companions frantically tried to endure against the magic attacks, and charged straight towards Suo Jia. They knew that at this point, they could only get close to Suo Jia to completely destroy him. This was their only chance of surviving. In other words, the only thing they could do was put all their efforts into nearing him.

With a blink of the eyes, the frost on his eyelashes instantly froze together. One-Eyed Bald Dragon rubbed at it in annoyance, but discovered that, in this mere moment, his four companions had already passed him and were charging towards Suo Jia at full speed.

Through layers of chilling mist and hail, One-Eyed Bald Dragon could clearly see that Suo Jia was proudly standing atop the Diamond Dragon's left shoulder in midair, looking at them with a pitying expression. At this, One-Eyed Bald Dragon suddenly realised that he'd seemed to have forgotten something extremely important!

While One-Eyed Bald Dragon was thinking, the enormous Diamond Dragon finally began to move. It first opened its large mouth, causing blue, frozen streams to flow outwards, instantly sealing the warrior in front. It then lifted its thick, pillar-like right leg, and stamped down violently at the nearest warrior, crushing him underneath its foot.

“Snap...” A fierce cracking sound rang out. One-Eyed Bald Dragon could clearly see his sealed companion’s Life Protection instantly drain under the Diamond Dragon’s foot, then after holding up for less than 0.01 seconds, the Diamond Dragon’s large foot smashed into the ground. Red blood shot out in all directions from underneath!

Despair! That’s right...after seeing this, One-Eyed Bald Dragon could only feel despair. As matters had reached this point already he finally realised what he had forgotten. Obviously...it was that he’d forgotten this giant ice dragon this whole time. To a warrior-type occupation, something as large as this thing was obviously the most brutal opponent. If they wanted to harm the mage under its protection, they’d have to get through the dragon first. But they clearly hadn’t properly realised they’d have to face this issue!

He looked on in desperation as the figures of the three warriors nearly simultaneously leapt up. They only shared one objective: Suo Jia. Just as the One-Eyed Bald Dragon was thinking all this, those three fellows were completely looking past the Diamond Dragon as if it didn’t exist. Although one of their companions had died under the Diamond Dragon’s foot, the battle was too intense for them to realize the bigger picture.

As One-Eyed Bald Dragon watched his three companions rise up in the air, he began to pray sincerely for the first time in his life. Although he clearly knew that hope was distant, One-Eyed Bald Dragon still prayed for God to miraculously descend!

Unfortunately, putting aside the question of whether God was omnipotent or not, even if he was, it was unknown if he’d really be willing to help...

Seeing that the three guys that had completely ignored it, the Diamond Dragon exploded in fury. Its claws flashed outwards like lightning, and each of its thick talons instantly caught onto a warrior’s arm, wrapping itself around their entire bodies as well. Only one warrior remained, and he charged towards Suo Jia at full

strength.

One-Eyed Bald Dragon's fists tightly curled up as he anxiously prayed, his gaze locked onto that last warrior's body. This was already the final hope...

Chapter 344 – Advancing Forwards Pt. 1

Everyone watched as all movements seemed to continuously slow down. The last warrior approached Suo Jia inch by inch in midair. On the other hand, Suo Jia expressionlessly watched the weapon gradually nearing his chest, showing no signs of evading or dodging.

“Whoosh...crunch!” The instant the weapon was about to pierce Suo Jia, a large blue figure flashed...and the warrior’s body mysteriously disappeared in midair.

One Eyed Bald Dragon stood in shock for a while. Finally...he discovered that the warrior’s legs were sticking out of the Diamond Dragon’s large mouth. The rest of the warrior was already inside.

“Crunch...crunch....crunch...” One Eyed Bald Dragon watched as the Diamond Dragon mercilessly began to chew. Every crunch would cause an entire strip of the Life Protection to disappear. After just a few rounds, the warrior’s Life Protection was completely drained. With the final chomp, the warrior was completely crushed on the spot.

At the same time, the Diamond Dragon’s claws continued to tighten. Finally, under this powerful force, the two warriors in the Diamond Dragon’s claws began to frantically release their battle qi in attempt to break free from the dragon’s grip.

The Diamond Dragon suddenly lowered its head to coldly stare at the two small things in its hold. Then...it raised its right claw, tossing the warrior in its grasp into its mouth, and the crunching sounds could be heard once more.

Everyone watching couldn’t help but be absolutely horrified at this cruel scene. How was this a battle? It was clearly a massacre, torturing people to their deaths!

As if for the sake of further proving everyone’s thoughts, the

Diamond Dragon clasped its two claws together as it continued to rigorously chew. Its sharp talons condensed from Mysterious Ice tightly grasped the last warrior in its hands, and it suddenly exerted strength outwards towards both sides...

“Yah!” A choked cry of misery was all that could be heard before the warrior’s body was ripped apart into two even halves. The Diamond Dragon looked at the broken and badly damaged corpse in its hands, and seemingly losing all interest, tossed the two halves to a side without giving it another glance.

“Whoosh...” A piercingly chilly wind blew across the square. At that moment, the Diamond Dragon was still standing proudly there, its mouth and talons full of blood. Suo Jia’s body was firmly planted on the dragon’s shoulder, his wide mage robes dancing around in the air behind him.

Suo Jia stared intensely at One Eyed Bald Dragon and stated, “We’ve already restrained ourselves. I didn’t want to become enemies with you, but...if that is Heaven’s decision, we must become the enemy. That’s why...you should go ahead and die without any regrets. If reincarnation exists, don’t ever come to the Greater Trade Routes again!”

With this, Suo Jia slowly reached forwards with his right hand. In that instant, the crimson ice stream that had been restlessly circling around him immediately left his side and leapt towards One Eyed Bald Dragon with a shriek.

As he watched the ice stream jump towards him, One Eyed Bald Dragon obviously wasn’t willing to just wait for death. He tightened his grip on his greatsword and his eyes flashed wildly. No matter what, he had to give it his all until the end. A wild beast being pressured towards death was when it was fiercest!

“Sfx...” Just when everyone had thought that a bitter struggle was about to unfold, the Diamond Dragon tilted its head in disdain and breathed outwards, freezing One Eyed Bald Dragon to the

ground he stood on.

Although the Diamond Dragon's Ice Seal couldn't really seal One Eyed Bald Dragon's movements, this small delay was enough for Suo Jia's ice stream to arrive. Instantly, it wrapped itself around One Eyed Bald Dragon's body several dozen times until it covered everything, even his head. Suo Jia and the Diamond Dragon's coordination had reached a nearly perfect level.

With his right hand holding the tail of the ice stream, Suo Jia silently activated Freezing Touch, activating four Ice and Snow Pacts. Finally, Suo Jia let go of the stream, allowing it to drop to the ground.

On the surface, it didn't seem like Suo Jia had done anything. The scene was completely calm. But within this calm, a life full of vigor had already unknowingly left.

Although Freezing Touch and Ice and Snow Pact didn't look like they'd have any extreme effects, directly using them on the enemy's body or even inside their body would be extremely powerful. Although one couldn't say it was guaranteed that the victim would die, but the four Ice and Snow Pacts, in addition to Freezing Touch, on the human body would, at the very least, have the strength of 10 Ice Roars.

Under Suo Jia's commands, the Diamond Dragon walked up to Xiang Yun, Nicole, and Roger, and then lifted them up to its shoulder as well. It then swiftly jumped 4-5 meters into the air, and with a slight flap of its wings, began to soar towards outside the city.

While in the air, Suo Jia's party crossed over several streets before landing at a wide cross-section. Then...under Suo Jia's control, the Diamond Dragon landed and left its combat state, before heading towards Suo Jia's residence with them.

Upon entering the luxurious living room, Suo Jia's party finally relaxed tiredly on the fur carpet. Suo Jia had used up all of his

ability in that battle just now. If he still hadn't been able to kill off the opposite party, then Suo Jia would've been completely powerless. That was also why Suo Jia had so hurriedly fled the scene.

Seeing the still somewhat panicked three companions, Suo Jia let out a sigh and turned to say to Roger, "Roger, now you should understand why I had so much self-restraint and tolerance, right? If it's just exchanging a few words of argument, we needn't be that bothered. After all...it's not like we're the murderous demon king!"

Still feeling some lingering fear, Roger patted his chest and sincerely replied, "I understand now; exercising forbearance doesn't necessarily indicate weakness, it simply prevents situations from being too troublesome. In reality, if we went around doing these huge fights to death all day, our image to others would definitely be reduced to a murderous demon king that viewed others as mere weeds!"

Gratified, Suo Jia nodded. Just as he was about to speak, Xiang Yun cut in, "That's right, real experts aren't people that wouldn't refuse to let someone go just because of a few upsetting words. If that were the case, their lives would be too exhausting. We have no qualms about killing others, but it's not like we enjoy it either."

"Mhm..." Bobbing her agreement, Nicole earnestly added, "That's right, every life is precious. Unless we have absolutely no other option, we can't kill people, and preventing that from happening is still best. In order to avoid these predicaments, we should all learn to be more patient in the future."

After some discussion, they finally restored their spirits. Although their strengths hadn't recovered, moving around was no longer an issue anymore, especially after Suo Jia had treated their wounds with the Moisture Technique. Only their physical strength, spirit power, magic power, and battle qi hadn't yet recovered to their best states.

The four people all crawled up, and comfortably leaned against chairs. At the same time, Suo Jia said in a heavy voice, “Everyone has already trained for half a year, and I’ve already passed the first checkpoint’s task. Is there anything else you guys have to do? If not, I think we should advance to the second checkpoint!”

In response to Suo Jia’s question, Xiang Yun and Roger simultaneously shook their heads, indicating they didn’t have any other matters to attend to. Only Nicole looked at Suo Jia excitedly. “I think there’s a place we definitely need to visit. I believe...this location will definitely have pleasant surprises for us!”

“Oh?” Suo Jia glanced at Nicole questioningly, and asked, “Tell me, where exactly is this place? Is it in some special area?”

Nicole firmly replied, “If we head out east about 1000 kilometers, there’s a hidden valley. There are prehistoric remains that Giant Icebears are currently guarding. I believe...that if we can defeat the Giant Icebears and enter this area, we can definitely gain profit!”

“Giant Icebears!” Suo Jia abruptly stood up, and looked at Nicole in excitement. After confirming that Nicole had personally seen the Giant Icebears, Suo Jia immediately decided that they wouldn’t try to pass the next checkpoint at the moment, and would instead advance towards this hidden valley...

Chapter 345 – Advancing Forwards Pt. 2

The next morning, the four of them left Enchanting Village, and following Nicole's lead, rushed towards the direction of this hidden valley. However, the more they walked, the more Suo Jia felt that something was strange; why did their surroundings look so familiar?

Finally, the air around them gradually turned chillier. As the cold winds shrieked past, Suo Jia recognized the place; wasn't this near Icebound City?

Doubtful, Suo Jia hesitantly asked Nicole, "Um...Nicole, exactly where is this place you want to go to? What is it called?"

"Mm..." After some thoughts, Nicole's eyes lit up and she happily replied, "Aiya, I just remembered. Outside the valley entrance, I seemed to have seen a stone tablet that had the words: Icebound Valley!"

"Mother of..." Upon hearing Nicole's reply, Suo Jia couldn't help but grow dizzy. Without saying another word, he turned around and walked in the direction they'd come from. Seeing this, although they didn't know what Suo Jia was doing, the other three hurriedly chased after Suo Jia.

The party headed west and rushed to Blazing City. This time, since all four people were present, Suo Jia took out all the junk from his 9 interspatial rings and his main ring to store 3000 barrels of Blazing Liquor, enough for all four of them.

Then, under Suo Jia's lead with the Diamond Dragon opening up their path, the four managed to rush to Icebound City in just four days. Aside from Suo Jia, this was the first time the other three had visited a city in the north.

After unloading the liquor at the tavern that Suo Jia had personally set up, Suo Jia chose a direction and led his group

members back to Icebound Valley. Only then did Nicole suddenly realise that the path Suo Jia had taken was actually the easiest one.

After stowing enough liquor, the group of four left from the other side of Icebound City, and headed towards Icebound Valley from the detailed path marked on the city map.

It wasn't very far, and the four soon encountered a large amount of magical beasts. These were different from other beasts; the magical beasts outside Icebound City were all ice elemental. When scanning around, there was absolutely no way of distinguishing what was snow and what was a beast.

In addition, Suo Jia felt powerless because, while the magical beasts here weren't completely immune to ice elemental magics, the freezing and sealing effects were entirely ineffective.

However, although these effects had disappeared, the destructive power of the magic hadn't. Ice Roar, the ice blades, or the rain of arrows from Hailstone still had their physical attack power. Although Suo Jia's strength had been weakened, it was clear that it hadn't been completely eradicated.

They pushed forwards with difficulty for an entire day, but when they stopped, they realised that they had only just moved a small distance. At the sight of the densely packed ice monsters, they couldn't help but sigh.

In admiration, Roger praised Nicole, "Heavens, I really can't imagine how you were able to charge through alone. Don't tell me...these magical beasts saw that you were female, and lowered themselves to your level?"

"Tch..." Nicole rolled her eyes in disdain and arrogantly replied, "Did you think everyone was like you, and only know how to barbarically charge through? Let me tell you...getting through this place alone is the simplest thing in the world for me. As long as I conceal myself, I can advance thousands of meters at a time. The distance we reached after traveling for an entire day is something I

could've crossed in just an hour by myself.”

While Nicole and Roger were in dispute, Suo Jia knit his brows together. If they continued on like this, based on Nicole's analysis, they wouldn't be able to reach the destination even after 2 weeks, and Suo Jia didn't have the luxury to waste so much time here.

Suo Jia resolutely made his decision and first ordered everyone to rest up properly. Then...the next morning, Suo Jia gathered everyone together to begin explaining the plan's details.

After breakfast, the Diamond Dragon entered its combat state and charged through the crowd of snow monsters in the distance. As for Nicole, Suo Jia, Xiang Yun, and Roger, they just eagerly watched in fascination at their surroundings while sitting on the Diamond Dragon's head.

The Diamond Dragon's head was abnormally gigantic, the size of a bus, and could fit 20-30 people without a problem. If a head this large were placed on another animal's body, it would definitely seem too big. But atop this 9 meter tall, incomparably sturdy Diamond Dragon's body, it was clearly just right.

There were four depressions on the Diamond Dragon's head. They were all shaped like seats, and at the moment...Suo Jia's party members were each sitting on one. They could advance while also enjoying the scenery; it could even be said that they had reached their destination with extreme comfort to some extent.

As the Diamond Dragon continued to plow through like a tank, more and more snow monsters gradually began to gather from various directions. There were six rings of monsters surrounding the Diamond Dragon. In the beginning, the Diamond Dragon could still jump and glide past, but as time passed, Suo Jia's party realised that they'd seemed to entered a sea of magical beasts. For as far as their eyes could see, their vision was filled with the figures of magical beasts running back and forth.

With lack of better option, Suo Jia stretched out his right hand.

Immediately...with a flash of blue light, Hailstone Technique was activated, and sharp ice arrows pierced downwards from the sky, falling within a 40 meter circumference around the dragon. Any magical beasts in the Diamond Dragon's proximity suffered from this devastating attack.

Originally, if he was outside the Greater Trade Routes, this kind of attack would decimate a large amount of magical beasts. But one couldn't forget that the magical beasts in the Greater Trade Routes all had Life Protections, and couldn't be wiped out so easily.

Only after the first Hailstone had ended did the snow monsters gradually collapse within the attack perimeter. But at the same time, magical beasts continued to fearlessly rush forth.

Faced against the snow monsters rush over like a flood, the Diamond Dragon grew angry. As the king of ice and snow, how could it tolerate the provocations of all these lower level ice elemental creatures? In an instant, it swung its tail, stamped its feet, and wildly began to fight as well.

Finally, after Suo Jia had released 10 Hailstone Techniques, the surrounding snow monsters were completely wiped out. At the same time, Suo Jia tiredly retracted his right hand, and swayed before weakly falling back into his seat, his face deathly pale.

His eyelids closed in exhaustion and he said in a low voice, "Xiang Yun, Roger, I leave the reste to you guys while I focus on recovering my spirit power and magic power. No matter what, you guys have to hold on!"

Roger and Xiang Yun solemnly nodded. Xiang Yun then replied, "Don't worry, Captain, just relax and rest. No matter what happens, we'll definitely be able to protect the party until you awaken!"

Suo Jia gave a relieved nod, and then shut his eyes, entering a deep layer within the meditative state to focus completely on restoring his magic power and spirit power. At the same time, the

Diamond Dragon rushed forward at full speed. In front of them, crowds of snow monsters could be seen appearing again.

They hadn't advanced far before finally...the Diamond Dragon was surrounded by snow monsters once more. Looking down at the snow monsters frenziedly attacking the Diamond Dragon and back at the meditating Suo Jia, Xiang Yun gritted his teeth and took the lead, jumping down from the Diamond Dragon's head.

In midair, Xiang Yun pulled out his Holy Crossblade once more, his hands tightly gripping the hilt, and he roared as he descended from the sky. The next instant...a flaming blade qi swept across, and Xiang Yun's slashing ability split all the snow monsters around into halves, leaving behind countless casualties!

"Hehe..." Seeing Xiang Yun wrapped in a violent battle, Roger's eyes lit up excitedly. He wiped his nose and Roger loudly declared, "****, how can I miss out on something so enjoyable! I'm joining..."

Following this...Roger suddenly flipped, his body somersaulting several times. In midair, Roger's body straightened, and his legs unfolded outwards into a dance, the afterimages flashing past repeatedly. One by one, the bodies of snow monsters in the air exploded into pieces! The shattering effect of Roger's combat boots were not something the snow monsters could possibly resist!

Seeing how busy Xiang Yun and Roger were, the Diamond Dragon's eyes glinted. It continued to sweep its nine meter long and extremely thick tail outwards, knocking over all the lower level snow monsters. Although the beasts weren't immediately killed, they were rendered helpless in front of Xiang Yun's and Roger's attacks.

Chapter 346 – I Want To Slaughter The Bears Pt. 1

The Diamond Dragon would first break through the snow monsters' Life Protections. Then, Roger and Xiang Yun would the creatures to hell. As such, the three of them flawlessly worked together. They constantly moved in methodic patterns, sometimes gathering together, sometimes dispersing.

They battled for some long while. By the time Xiang Yun and Roger had realised that there were no traces of snow monsters to be seen in their surroundings, the battle qi in their bodies had already been completely exhausted by an alarming amount. With the Diamond Dragon's help, they returned to their places on top of its head.

As soon as they returned, Xiang Yun and Roger were pleasantly surprised after discovering that Suo Jia had actually already awoken, his eyes shining as he looked at the two of them. Seeing how bright his expression was, the two men finally let out a breath. It was clear to them that Suo Jia had already recovered!

Not daring to waste any time, Xiang Yun and Roger hurriedly returned to their seats and closed their eyes to rest, putting all of their efforts into restoring their battle qi. Although Suo Jia's magic power and spirit power were overpowering, he was, after all, just one person. Him managing to slaughter so many magical beasts alone was already an extreme; Roger and Xiang Yun's combined powers were needed to complete such a task.

As the Diamond Dragon advanced, snow monsters appeared around them once more, and Suo Jia couldn't help but sigh at the sight of them gathering together. Just as he was about to start attacking....Suo Jia suddenly felt something give away underneath his feet. His body strangely sank downwards.

Amidst his confusion, Suo Jia was shocked to discover that his

body had started to sink downwards. Soon after, he had fallen three to four meters, down to the Diamond Dragon's central core area. With this, Suo Jia was abruptly faced with the little pet's body before him.

“Chirp chirp!” Facing Suo Jia, the Diamond Dragon chirped urgently. Hearing this, Suo Jia couldn't help but start as he suddenly realised...the Diamond Dragon's combat state seemed to be nearing its limit!

Suo Jia raised his head to look upwards in shock. He knew that if the Diamond Dragon released its form now, Xiang Yun and Roger would most likely die. There were so many snow monsters surrounding them that they would soon be consumed to the point where not even their bones remained. Suo Jia's strength alone wasn't enough to protect them.

Actually, it wasn't just Roger and Xiang Yun; Suo Jia also wouldn't be able to escape either. At the moment, his position was at the center of the snow monster mass. He couldn't possibly advance or retreat!

“Chirp chirp!” While Suo Jia was exhausting his entire spirit and mind on thinking this over, the Diamond Dragon urgently cried again. It opened and closed its small mouth repeatedly, using its small, red tongue to lick the corners of its mouth.

Seeing this, Suo Jia's eyes suddenly shone brightly. He excitedly pulled out a batch of four colored potions from his interspatial ring, and without a second thought, tossed it into the Diamond Dragon's mouth.

With a single gulp, the Diamond Dragon swallowed the potions and contentedly closed its eyes. Its body emitted a hazy blue light that quickly spread outwards.

As the blue glow passed by, the Diamond Dragon's two meter thick Glacial Armor suddenly gave out a clear, cracking sound. The Diamond Dragon's somewhat deflating figure once again stood tall

and straight. The cold air around it increased, and the dragon's armor was even shining brighter than before!

“Hahahaha....” At first, Suo Jia had frozen for a bit at the sight, but he then threw his head back and laughed joyously. The Diamond Dragon could actually keep eating four colored potions like this to restore its state in this situation; that meant there was no problem at all. As long as enough four colored potions were used, wouldn't the Diamond Dragon be able to maintain its combat state forever?

Suo Jia didn't waste any time and quickly used telepathy to communicate with the Diamond Dragon. The next moment...Suo Jia's body rose upwards and appeared once more on the dragon's head.

Suo Jia looked around and saw the densely packed snow monsters flooding towards the Diamond Dragon again. With a sigh, he once again activated the ice magic: Hailstone!

Finally, after Suo Jia had eradicated all the snow monsters before him once more, everything before them had calmed down. They traveled very far without encountering any more snow monsters. After circling a small mound, an extremely large snow wolf appeared before them!

Not daring to continue forwards and seeing that it was already getting late... Suo Jia ordered the Diamond Dragon to jump and fly to the top of the mound, where it was tall enough for neither the snow monsters nor the snow wolf to climb up. It was a guaranteed safe zone.

The night passed without incident. The next morning, the four of them headed out again. Like they did the day before, they continued onwards towards Icebound Valley. Within the following week, the party of four passed through areas with snow wolves, snowmen, snow lions, and snow leopards before finally reaching the outskirts of Icebound Valley.

Icebound Valley was a ravine shaped like a “C”. It only had one entrance and there were many Giant Icebears dwelling there. These kinds of bears not only possessed powerful defense and tyrannical strength, they were most importantly great in number. It was impossible to tell from a single glance how many there were.

Originally, if it were just Icebears, this place wouldn't be hard for thieves adept at stealth to pass through. However, there was also a flying type magical beast here: Bikun. It was similar to a bat; it didn't have eyes and relied solely on heat detection to determine where it and its enemy were located. As long as its enemy was warm-blooded, they'd be discovered and attacked.

Although stealth could allow one to sneak past the Icebears, it was useless before the Bikuns. No matter how much one tried to conceal themselves, they'd definitely be discovered. And once attacked by the Bikun, their concealment would drop, and they'd end up being surrounded by Giant Icebears.

The Giant Icebears were rank nine magical beasts. Although they weren't as powerful as the Frost Wurm, they were lower by only one level and had a lifespan of at least 800 years!

In this world, anything with a “Giant Ice/Frost” in its name was an extremely amazing magical beast. The Great Icebear was well-known; aside from the overwhelming defensive and offensive powers it naturally possessed, it also had illusion level Life Protections! Most importantly, the Great Icebear had tyrannical physical power. Although it couldn't be compared to a Diamond Dragon in its peak phase, it couldn't be compared to a typical magical beast either.

The Great Icebear was over 6 meters tall, with a more robust body than the Diamond Dragon, and was proficient in the use of the Trampling fruit's ability. This allowed it to instantly make all life forms within a 10 meter perimeter feel dizzy. That instant was enough for the Great Icebear's sharp claws to begin tearing apart any defenses.

It would be accurate to say that, aside from the Diamond Dragon in its peak period, no defense could block the Great Icebear's attacks. If there was just one of them, then it might've been possible, but there were at least over 10,000 of them here. Receiving any attack consisted of more than just one Icebear's attacks!

In addition, each gathering area for Great Icebears had a Great Icebear King. Based on records, the Great Icebear King had a height of around 10 meters, and...its Trampling fruit's abilities could extend to 100 meters. Even the Black Dragon couldn't possibly escape this fruit's effects. Thus...although the Icebear wasn't on par with the Frost Wurm in terms of just strength, it was actually a ruler of the magical beasts without a natural enemy! Even a Diamond Dragon wouldn't dare to charge into Great Icebear territory alone.

Looking at the extremely large and tall Icebear from a distance, Suo Jia knew that challenging one alone wouldn't be impossible to beat. However, the problem was that these bears never fought alone!

Nicole looked towards the distant Icebound Valley in excitement and said, "Boss, I can guarantee that the ruins in Icebound Valley have never been excavated before. No person can go through the entrance of those prehistoric remains alive. Even those Epic ranked hero grandpas from back then wouldn't have had any means of entering!"

Suo Jia nodded, deep in thought. He also understood that in terms of just strength, nobody could possibly ever go near those prehistoric remains. Even the Seven Pinnacles combined would be just as powerless.

The only way one would be able to break through the Icebears' interception would be with the aid of 10+ Diamond Dragons. But the issue now was, how few Diamond Dragons existed at the moment? Even if there did exist ten, why would they ever offer to

help? In reality, even finding ten Diamond Dragons would be like the Arabian Nights.

Suo Jia stared at the Great Icebears roaming around in the distance and fell into deep thought. Relying on martial power, one could continue training until their death and still be unable to come close to the prehistoric remains. In that case, the only thing that they could depend on was knowledge!

Chapter 347 – I Want To Slaughter The Bears Pt. 2

Despite pondering this for a long time, Suo Jia still wasn't able to come up with a solution. The overpowering defense was something that prevented even earth mages from breaking through and damaging their bodies, so the attacks of a water mage were clearly ineffective. Fire elemental magics also required no discussion; that was completely restrained by the ice element. In addition, while the wind element was not completely subdued, wind elemental attacks were the most inferior.

The current issue was that, even if a Great Icebear was lured out by itself, there was absolutely no way of harming it. The four elemental magics would all inflict extremely little damage, so fighting was pretty much pointless.

Drawing a Great Icebear out by itself wasn't hard, it was eliminating it that proved to be difficult. At the moment, neither Suo Jia, Xinag Yun, Roger, nor Nicole were able to harm the Great Icebear at all. In a moment, the battle seemed to have fallen into a hopeless situation.

"Boss..." Roger looked at Suo Jia's brows furrowed deep in thought and hesitantly said, "It looks to me like we should leave first. Our strength is too weak at the moment. Once we've grown stronger, we can come back and deal with these Great Icebears!"

Glancing at Roger, Suo Jia said in a heavy voice, "It's not an issue of strength. Even if we trained until we were the strongest in the world, we wouldn't be able to go up against these Great Icebears!"

"Mmm..." With a profound nod, Xiang Yun agreed. "That's right, Captain is correct. If, let's say...there was a way to go near the prehistoric remains, then the solution definitely wouldn't depend on using strength to charge in!"

Nicole nodded as well. “Yes, in reality, those Great Icebears are like normal bears, while we are like normal humans. An ordinary, unarmed person couldn’t possibly pass through an area guarded by a giant bear! Moreover, these bears are especially bloodthirsty, so this just further proves the point.”

“Haha....” With a bitter laugh, Suo Jia helplessly said, “That’s right. Actually, it’s not just an issue of us. Even if we had 10,000 people, we still wouldn’t be able to get through the guarding of 10,000 bears. It’s not a problem of numbers at all.”

“But...” Roger looked at Suo Jia in confusion. “If one cannot get through relying on strength alone, isn’t it an impossible feat? What are we doing here then?”

“Hm....” Suo Jia pondered, “Yeah, at the very least, there has been no person able to come up with a method up until now. But I firmly believe that there must be some solution. It just needs to be thought of.”

Suo Jia turned around to say to Nicole, “Nicole...go out this minute and draw a single Great Icebear over. No matter what, I want to probe around completely first and then see if I can come up with any countermeasures!”

Nicole nodded and swiftly entered the concealed state, rushing over towards Icebound Valley. At the same time, Xiang Yun asked in confusion, “Captain, I don’t really understand. Why must we get near those prehistoric remains? If this was such an easy task, tan people would’ve visited the place hundreds of years ago!”

“Haha...” Suo Jia chuckled and explained, “Actually, my goal isn’t the prehistoric remains, but those Great Icebears. I need their monster cores to quickly boost my Diamond Dragon’s strength!”

Suo Jia turned around to look at the Diamond Dragon and solemnly stated, “I’m sure you guys can also tell how useful the Diamond Dragon is. Without it, we wouldn’t have been able to get here!”

“Yeah...” Xiang Yun excitedly replied, “I understand now, Captain. In reality, once the Diamond Dragon is powerful enough, we can pretty much pass through any obstruction on the Greater Trade Routes. That’s why...the Diamond Dragon’s might is an irreplaceable support to us!”

To this, Roger finally reacted as well. He laughed, “I also understand now. If the Diamond Dragon’s strength suddenly rises, then we can save a huge amount of time. We’d be able to get through a month long journey in just 3 or 4 days. The Diamond Dragon is definitely an overpowered existence!”

“Haha....” Suo Jia nodded and firmly stated, “Yes. We can temporarily put off increasing our own strength, but strengthening the Diamond Dragon must be prioritized. As long as it becomes more powerful, our team’s might will increase as well!”

Suo Jia glanced at Xiang Yun and smiled, “In addition, this isn’t just for the sake of our rate of advancement. Even if an enemy struck a battle with us, with the Diamond Dragon as the ultimate shield and weapon, we can advance as we attack and retreat as we guard! It can be said that raising the Diamond Dragon’s strength by a level is equivalent to raising all of our strengths by a level!”

“Mhm...” With a joyous nod, Xiang Yun sighed in admiration, “That’s correct. With the Diamond Dragon as the center, we can work in harmony, attacking while advancing and guarding while retreating. As long as the Diamond Dragon doesn’t fall, our group will not die!”

Up to this point, Xiang Yun suddenly clenched his teeth and resolutely ground out, “In that case...then no matter how troublesome the Great Icebears are, we have to seize them and use any methods to get our hands on a few of their rank 9 monster cores!”

Suddenly, a boom could be heard coming from the direction of Icebound Valley. The three of them turned their heads, only to see

a 6 meter tall, giant white bear rapidly chasing behind Nicole. It was heading towards their direction.

Seeing this, Xiang Yun and Roger hurriedly entered their combat states. At the same time, Suo Jia used telepathy to notify the Diamond Dragon of this, telling it that it must be careful. If it couldn't withstand against the bear, it should immediately release its Glacial Armor and flee into the air. Protecting its own safety was the number one priority.

Swiftly adopting a battle position, Suo Jia once again told everyone that they must not get within 10 meters of the Great Icebear. Even if they neared it, they would have to retreat outside of the 10 meter radius at full speed once the Great Icebear lifted its feet. Otherwise, they'd get hit by dizziness and would be unable to hold up against the bear.

As everyone prepared themselves, the Great Icebear was getting closer and closer. Just as they were about to welcome it....the Great Icebear suddenly raised its head upon exiting the Icebound Valley, then ran back into the valley.

"F**k!" Suo Jia couldn't help but let out a strangled curse. This thing was too intelligent. It actually didn't dare to leave the valley. What were they to do now?

After thinking over this for a long time, Suo Jia finally led everyone to quietly rush to where the Great Icebear had turned back, and then asked Nicole to draw another one over.

Following Suo Jia's commands...Nicole quickly drew another Great Icebear over. As it swiftly circled around the corner of the mountain, the Great Icebear appeared before them. Suo Jia abruptly raised a hand, accurately blasting an Ice Arrow into the bear's head.

Having suffered from this sudden attack, the Great Icebear froze for a moment before throwing its head back and roaring into the sky. The next instant....a fierce boom rang out as the entire area

trembled. Countless Great Icebears could suddenly be seen running over on all fours from the opposite corner of the mountain.

“My god!” It can even call for its companions! Isn’t it too intelligent?! Hurry up and run...” With a miserable shout of despair, Roger was the first to turn around and run away. Suo Jia, Xiang Yun, and Nicole obviously didn’t waste any time either, hurriedly running off after Roger, who was frantically fleeing in the opposite direction.

Fortunately, the Great Icebears weren’t willing to go far from Icebound Valley, nor were they very fast. Seeing Suo Jia’s party run far away, they didn’t bother chasing any further and simply turned around to return to the valley.

Seeing this result, Suo Jia still refused to give up and sent Nicole to go draw another one over. Only this time, as soon as it saw Nicole’s figure, the Great Icebear let out a howl and a group of Great Icebears began chasing after Nicole. Only after running far away was Nicole able to shake them off.

Nicole refused to accept this result, and directly turned back to run towards the Icebound Valley. Soon, her figure disappeared into the Icebound Valley entrance once more. But even after a long while, Nicole didn’t reappear. Just as Suo Jia and the other were beginning to worry, Nicole walked back out with a bitter expression, with absolutely no Great Icebears following behind...

Chapter 348 – Impossible Transaction Pt. 1

Suo Jia looked at Nicole in shock, and asked in confusion, “What happened? It can’t be that...the bears didn’t see you?”

Nicole gloomily met Suo Jia’s gaze and smiled bitterly, “They saw me, but...those guys actually dared to ignore me. I didn’t dare to get any closer either, so I could only come back out.”

Suo Jia’s body trembled upon hearing these words. Only now did he suddenly realize another issue; this whole time, he’d seemed to have regarded the Giant Icebears as wild beasts, when, in fact, anything that had survived for over a hundred years like them would have become elites by this point.

The Great Icebears had lifespans of 800 years, and were typically all 400-500 years old. The younger ones all stayed deep within Icebound Valley; only the ones of at least 500 years of age were dispatched to the entrance.

Suo Jia looked off in the direction of Icebound Valley, and immediately realized that these giant creatures mostly likely possessed extremely high intelligence. Other people might not have understood this point, but Suo Jia definitely did.

The Diamond Dragon, for example, had already entered its long term phase, and possessed the intelligence of a 10 year old human. It could completely understand everything Suo Jia said, and move according to his commands. It was just that Suo Jia couldn’t understand the Diamond Dragon’s words.

According to historical records, an 800 year old Diamond Dragon possessed the intelligence of a person who was at least 40 years old. Even if the Diamond Dragon was on the less intelligent side, it would still have the IQ of at least a 20 year old human.

In other words, drawing these creatures out by relying on superior human intelligence and then eliminating them

individually would definitely not happen. Did that mean...that these Great Icebears were really impossible to break through?

“Wait!” While pondering this, Suo Jia seemed to see a light flash before his eyes. Since these bears possessed such high intelligence, then...couldn't he try communicating with them? As a merchant, Suo Jia definitely understood one thing: in this world, there was no such thing as an impossible transaction.

It could be said that loyalty didn't really exist; it was just the result of betrayal having a worthless bargaining chip. It could also be said that self-restraint didn't exist; it was simply the result of something not having enough temptation.

However, in terms of communication, language became an issue. Although Suo Jia's knowledge wasn't that extensive, he pretty much knew everything that he ever needed to know. But, up until now, he'd never heard of anyone being able to speak the language of a beast!

“Chirp chirp.” While Suo Jia was thinking this over, the Diamond Dragon suddenly chirped excitedly. Suo Jia questioningly turned to look at the dragon, and his eyes abruptly lit up. If a human could communicate with another human, then could one magical beast communicate with another magical beast?

Suo Jia quickly used telepathy to tell the Diamond Dragon this. After hearing this, the Diamond Dragon nodded without any hesitation and then strode towards the entrance of Icebound Valley.

Upon arriving, the Diamond Dragon let out a loud cry. Unfortunately, since the Diamond Dragon's body was so small, the sound of its cry couldn't travel very far, no matter how hard it tried.

“Rumble! Rumble...” While the Diamond Dragon was making a clamor, a loud rumbling sound could be heard as the Giant Icebears from within the valley once again leapt up to run out.

Their four limbs raced across the ground as they charged aggressively at the dragon.

As it watched the Giant Icebears gradually approach, the Diamond Dragon spread its wings as it continued to shout out, indicating that it wouldn't attack. However...the group of Giant Icebears clearly didn't care about the Diamond Dragon's intentions, and, with a wave of some of their large paws, the Diamond Dragon's Glacial Armor instantly crumbled.

Fortunately, the Diamond Dragon could fly, and it swiftly leapt out from the broken pieces of its Glacial Armor, dodging around the Giant Icebears' attacks. Just at that moment, the dozens of Giant Icebears almost simultaneously raised their feet, and then stamped down hard with a bang.

"Not good!" Suo Jia gasped with an expression of horror on his face. He frantically began to race out, with the intent of saving the Diamond Dragon. However, before he'd gone more than a few steps, Xiang Yun held Suo Jia back. Wouldn't charging over like that just be equivalent to seeking death?

Held back by Xiang Yun, Suo Jia was just about to roar out before Nicole urgently said, "Young Master Suo Jia, you don't have to worry, the Diamond Dragon is fine. Look over there, isn't it flying back right now?"

Suo Jia doubtfully turned his head to look over, and indeed...the Diamond Dragon had already risen into the air, and was flying over at full speed. The pack of Giant Icebears continued to roar helplessly at the air for a bit before turning around and walking back into Icebound Valley again.

Suo Jia was shocked at the sight. At the same time, Roger excitedly stated, "It turns out that...the Giant Icebear's trampling ability is only effective on land creatures. It has no effect in the air!"

"No!" Nicole shook her head and rebuked with a grave

expression, “It states very clearly in the information my grandfather left behind that flying creatures only have a certain probability of being able to escape the effect, they aren’t completely immune. This isn’t anything like a blind spot in the Giant Icebears’ attack!”

Upon hearing this, the others, who’d thought they’d managed to find a loophole, let out sighs. At the same time, Nicole firmly stated, “This time, it’s because the Diamond Dragon’s body is small, and dragons are hard to kill. You can’t be so haphazard next time.”

Suo Jia shuddered. He could risk other things, but Suo Jia definitely wouldn’t go out and gamble with the Diamond Dragon’s life on the line. Moreover, Suo Jia firmly believed that Nicole wouldn’t lie. This trampling ability probably wasn’t ineffective in the air.

“Chirp chirp...” The Diamond Dragon angrily chirped at Suo Jia, flapped its wings, and then began flying towards Icebound Valley once more. No matter how much Suo Jia shouted at it, it didn’t turn back.

As Suo Jia watched the Diamond Dragon’s body quickly disappear around the corner, he anxiously tried to chase after it. But just as he circled around the mountain, Suo Jia helplessly discovered that the Diamond Dragon had already flown into Icebound Valley.

However, Suo Jia let out a sigh of relief, having seen the Diamond Dragon flying. Fortunately...the pet’s flying height probably surpassed the Giant Icebears’ attack range, so it was safe in the air. However...what exactly was it trying to do?

Putting aside Suo Jia and the others’ anxious worrying, the Diamond Dragon was diligently flapping its wings and flying over to Icebound Valley. After a long while, the great ruins of a shrine appeared before them. In front of the ruins site a thick, sturdy,

extremely large, white bear, that stood nearly 15 meters tall, contentedly pacing around.

“Chirp chirp!” The Diamond Dragon sharply cried out at the large bear below it.

At the sound of the Diamond Dragon’s voice, the Giant Icebear raised its head inquisitively to look over in its direction, and lazily responded with a low cry of its own.

After hearing the Giant Icebear King’s low cry, the Diamond Dragon excitedly descended from the air, landing on the Giant Icebear King’s nose. It continuously waved its front claws around, and the noises coming from its mouth did not cease.

Regretfully, the languages of the Great Frost Wyrms and the Giant Icebear were clearly unintelligible as well. Luckily, after its long relationship with Suo Jia, the Diamond Dragon had picked up some simple body language. Although it wasn’t very complete, Suo Jia could at least figure out what it was saying based on its actions.

Now, it was really a test of the Giant Icebear King’s intelligence. Unfortunately, the Giant Icebear King didn’t seem to understand what the Diamond Dragon was saying. It lazily closed its eyes, its large paw quickly swatting at the area in front of its nose in an attempt to chase the Diamond Dragon away.

It was a good thing that the Diamond Dragon still hadn’t let down its guard, and rose into the air the instant the Giant Icebear King had raised its paw. If it had dodged even half a moment late, the Diamond Dragon would most likely have been flattened, like a fly being swatted.

The Diamond Dragon aimed a last, helpless glance at the Giant Icebear King, before turning around to fly out of Icebound Valley. Suo Jia and the others watched as the Diamond Dragon soon appeared at the valley entrance and swiftly raced towards them, lightly landing in Suo Jia’s arms.

Having just fought and flown a long distance, the Diamond Dragon, probably due to fatigue, opened its mouth and quickly licked its lips as it began to drool. Seeing this, Suo Jia dotingly chuckled, and, as a form of reward, pulled out two more bundles of four colored potions and tossed them at the Diamond Dragon.

The Diamond Dragon caught the potions in its mouth, and, just as it was prepared to enjoy the sweet treat...its eyes suddenly lit up, and it quickly flew out of Suo Jia's embrace. With the four colored potions in its mouth, it flew full speed towards Icebound Valley again.

Chapter 349 – Impossible Transaction Pt. 2

Upon flying back to the Giant Icebear King's side, the little pet opened its mouth and spat out the four colored potions. It extended a claw, trying its best to draw out a picture so that the Giant Icebear King could understand what it was trying to say.

The Giant Icebear King lazily opened one eye to look at the little creature before it again, and didn't move. Seeing this, the Diamond Dragon simply stretched its talons out to pick up the four colored potions, toss them into its own mouth, and vigorously chew. With a large gulp, the Diamond Dragon showed an expression of content.

Afterwards, the Diamond Dragon pointed at the four colored potions on the ground, then once more at the Giant Icebear King's mouth, gesturing for it to eat the potions. Seeing the four potions, the Giant Icebear King indolently opened its great mouth and, with a curl of its tongue, put all of the potions in its mouth.

The Diamond Dragon watched on with great anticipation. Those four colored potions made it feel so comfortable, as if it was floating without physical restrictions, so the Giant Icebear King would definitely enjoy them as well...

Unfortunately, the Diamond Dragon had overlooked the difference in its body size compared to the Giant Icebear King's, as well as the difference between their strengths. What stimulated the little pet was something that the Giant Icebear King couldn't even feel; it was basically the same thing as eating some rocks.

Despite waiting for a while, no reaction could be seen from the Giant Icebear King, who instead began snoring; fortunately, no other Giant Icebears dared to be in its vicinity. Otherwise, without the Giant Icebear King's protection, the little pet would've probably been killed for sure.

With the lack of a better option, the Diamond Dragon rose up

into the air and desolately flew back outside Icebound Valley. It really wanted to help its master, but it looked like the Giant Icebear King didn't really like what the Diamond Dragon had brought over.

Although the little pet was just a magical beast, it wasn't like magical beasts had low intelligence. In reality, both the Black Dragon King and the Diamond Dragon King all had intelligence levels higher than that of a human. Those that believed magical beasts were dumber than humans were the real idiots.

Having been by Suo Jia's side this whole time, the Diamond Dragon had witnessed many of Suo Jia's interactions with other people. Although the Diamond Dragon couldn't understand anything at its current state, it did understand that if one wanted something, one had to present something of equal value in exchange for it.

Of course, this was also related to how Suo Jia had raised it. Most of the time, the Diamond Dragon didn't have the chance to enjoy the four colored potions, but, as soon as it won a battle, Suo Jia would naturally pull out some potions to reward it. This counted as another type of exchange.

Soon, the Diamond Dragon had left the valley and returned to Suo Jia's group. At the sight of the Diamond Dragon's depressed mood, Suo Jia seemed to have understood something.

In disbelief, Suo Jia asked incredulously, "Little pet! You...did you take those four colored potions just now to try to initiate a transaction?"

The Diamond Dragon nodded. Suo Jia couldn't help but gape in shock. He hadn't imagined that the Diamond Dragon's IQ was so high already, to the point where it had learned how to make deals!

However, Suo Jia knew that any of the Giant Icebears wouldn't have reacted to the four colored potions, let alone the Giant Icebear King. From a pure strength level, Suo Jia was still much

weaker than even the most average Giant Icebear.

Judging from the Diamond Dragon's expression, it didn't seem like the Giant Icebear King had been satisfied with the item being exchanged, which was also a very natural outcome. However...this wasn't the fundamental issue of the transaction; the main problem was that the item couldn't necessarily make the opposite party interested!

As a merchant, Suo Jia believed that in order to obtain what one needed the most, they had to give something the opposite party needed the most in exchange. If it was not something essential, the transaction would not go through.

Suo Jia rubbed his chin in deep thought, contemplating a question: what would the Giant Icebear like the most? Blazing Liquor? That was impossible. By nature, ice elemental creatures hated things that emitted heat the most. If Suo Jia really gave the Blazing Liquor to the little pet to exchange, it would most likely not be able to return alive.

This thought process wasn't without reason. Actually, the Diamond Dragon had snuck a sip of the Blazing Liquor before, and had ended up intensely sick for 3-4 days, with its body extremely weakened as it suffered pain worse than death. The Giant Icebear King was just like the Diamond Dragon; it was also a peak-level ice elemental magical beast!

Suo Jia turned around and shouted at his three companions without much hope, "Hey! Do you guys know anything bears like? Any particular things they take pleasure in?"

In response, Roger immediately shook his head, indicating that he didn't know. However...Suo Jia hadn't been hoping he'd know in the first place. The one that had the greatest chance of knowing the answer would be Nicole. As a treasure hunter, she was supposed to be an expert in this field!

However, under Suo Jia's gaze, Nicole shook her head and said,

“This...is something I don’t know either. What things do they enjoy? We only research their battle characteristics, not the details of their lives!”

Suo Jia gave a sign of despair and looked off towards Icebound Valley in the distance. He really wanted to leave immediately, but couldn’t commit to the decision either. After all, obtaining a Giant Icebear’s monster core would allow the Diamond Dragon’s strength to shoot up as rapidly as a rocket.

While Suo Jia was hesitating, Xiang Yun lightly coughed, and said in a low voice, “Um...Captain Suo Jia, why don’t you ask me?”

“Hm?” Suo Jia doubtfully turned around and dubiously asked Xiang Yun, “Brother, don’t tell me that you know what bears like?”

“Hehe...” With a smug smile, Xiang Yun nodded. “I just happen to live on a mountain with plenty of bears, so I have some grasp of what bears are like.”

“Wow!” Suo Jia couldn’t help but become ecstatic at these words. In his excitement, he grabbed Xiang Yun’s arm and urged, “Quickly! Tell me, what do bears like?”

“Mmm...” Xiang Yun murmured, and asked quietly, “Bears are extremely gluttonous creatures. Guess, what do bears like to eat the most?”

Nicole answered in disdain, “Is there even a need to ask that? Obviously, it’s meat!”

“Wrong!” Xiang Yun firmly cut off Nicole’s answer. At the same time, Roger asked in disbelief, “Brother, if bears don’t like to eat meat, don’t tell me that they like to eat grass?”

Xiang Yun shot Roger a look of contempt. “What do you think bears are? Let me tell you, bears don’t even eat dead things, why would they go eat grass?”

Xiang Yun proudly looked at Suo Jia and stated, “Let me tell you.

Bears are the greediest animals, and you would never be able to guess what they love eating the most. If I hadn't personally witnessed it countless times, I wouldn't have believed they loved eating this kind of thing either!"

"Heavens..." Suo Jia covered his eyes in pain, "I beg of you, Brother, if you really do know, can you stop baiting us, and just say it? This is very important to me!"

"Hehe..." With an embarrassed smile, Xiang Yun said deliberately, "I remember there was a time I went on a mountain to train in the martial arts and crossed paths with a hive of killer bees. Just from seeing the hive hanging down from the tree, I had the strong urge to eat the honey inside!"

Although nobody knew what Xiang Yun wanted to say, the others patiently continued to listen as Xiang Yun continued, "Just as I was about to act, I noticed a black shadow had stealthily appeared next to the hive and swatted it down. Afterwards...without paying any regard to the fact that its face and nose were swelling from the venomous killer bees' stings, it avariciously split the hive apart and deliciously ate all of the honey inside!"

With this, Xiang Yun turned to face the other three and smiled, "Why don't you guys guess what exactly this thing that risked the danger to swat down a hive and eat the honey within it was?"

Suo Jia gasped in astonishment, "Heavens, how could a creature like that exist?! A whole hive of killer bees is fierce enough to sting a wild beast to death! Killer bee stingers are as large and sharp as toothpicks, and they have extremely fatal venom!"

Chapter 350 – Difficult Transaction Pt. 1

In response to Suo Jia's words, Xiang Yun nodded, "That's right, those killer bees indeed have the ability to kill that black shadow. However, despite this being the case, the black shadow still couldn't resist the temptation of the honey, and resolutely acted anyways. In addition, I personally witnessed it doing this more than once! It continued until it was stung to death!"

"Heavens!" Suo Jia stared at Xiang Yun in shock and disbelief. "Don't tell me that creature was a bear?! How could such a big thing love eating honey to that extent?"

"Haha..." Xiang Yun smiled at Suo Jia and confirmed, "I know it's hard to believe, but please trust me. This is definitely the truth. Bears love honey more than their own lives. As long as honey is present, they won't pay any mind to injuries or even their own lives!"

Without saying anything more, Suo Jia immediately turned around and said to the Diamond Dragon, "Quick, immediately change into your combat state. We have something to do!"

Seeing Suo Jia's fired up state, Xiang Yun, Roger, and Nicole couldn't help but furrow their brows. Just then, Suo Jia quickly turned around and shouted, "And you guys, what are you still all standing there blankly for? Hurry up and get on the road, we need to ship honey over!"

Although they didn't know what Suo Jia wanted to do, the other three knew that Suo Jia wasn't the type that would abuse his privileges as captain for his own benefit without caring about others. Otherwise, he wouldn't have let everyone move around freely. With three more companions, any journey became safer, and the ability to ship items around would be boosted many fold!

After a journey of frenzied fighting, finally...Suo Jia's party returned to Icebound City. They then headed west, rushing over to

Telei City. The reason this was their destination was because it was the city of flowers, the source of honey production.

The busy journey passed without incident. Half a month later, Suo Jia's party rushed back to the entrance of Icebound Valley while carrying 1000 large barrels of honey. The reason they'd chosen large barrels was because the Giant Icebear King was just too large; it wouldn't be able to taste anything from small barrels.

With Suo Jia's help, the Diamond Dragon struggled to drag a bag behind it as it flew over towards Icebound Valley. It wasn't that Suo Jia didn't want to give it a large barrel to bring over, but that the Diamond Dragon's flying ability was still too weak. There was no way it could move around such a heavy barrel of honey.

In its combat state, the Diamond Dragon could only glide across a distance of 100-200 meters, so it could only fly in its normal state. In such a condition, the Diamond Dragon could only carry around 15kg. If it tried anything heavier, it wouldn't be able to fly as proficiently, nor as far.

With its talons tightly gripping the bag full of honey, the Diamond Dragon diligently flew in front of the Giant Icebear King. At nearly the same time, the Giant Icebear King opened its eyes curiously to survey the little pet, confused as to why it had once again come to disturb it.

"Plop..." The instant it reached the Giant Icebear King, the Diamond Dragon's energy had finally been exhausted, its claws unable to hold the bag up any longer. With a dull thud, the bag immediately fell to the ground and split open. The thick honey rapidly flowed outwards, immediately releasing a strong scent of nectar.

When it detected this fatal scent, the Giant Icebear King's eyes suddenly opened very wide. It lightly sniffed its nose, and, upon smelling this aroma that could even shake one's soul, the Giant Icebear King's eyes instantly turned crimson!

Once it saw the thick honey flowing in all directions, the Giant Icebear King couldn't resist any longer. It swiftly stuck its large tongue out and licked hard at the ground. Immediately...the faint, but fragrant, sweetness made it moan as it enjoyed the saccharine taste that quickly traveled from its tongue to its head...

The sensation the bear experienced from eating the honey was something that others couldn't possibly guess. Any bear that had tasted honey before would be unable to resist the temptation ever again. Even if they had to sacrifice their life as payment, they couldn't ignore any honey before them. The Giant Icebear King wasn't even afraid of it being poisonous, because honey was just more important than poison!

The Giant Icebear King closed its eyes, its entire body trembling. Although the scent was faint, the memory and desire coming from deep in its soul made the taste impossible to forget. Having experienced such a wonderful taste before, the Giant Icebear King's longing for honey couldn't recede; rather, it increased by tenfold, and even a hundredfold!

With a fierce roar, the Giant Icebear King was finally unable to stay sprawled across the ground. It impatiently stood up, and gestured excitedly at the little pet. Unfortunately, it still didn't understand the little dragon's movements, nor could the little dragon understand the Giant Icebear King's movements.

After contemplating this issue for a long time, the Diamond Dragon decided to interpret it as this large creature definitely still wanting to eat honey, and was currently asking it to go back and grab more. With this, the Diamond Dragon nodded, and rose into the air again to fly out of the valley.

To the Giant Icebear King, the Diamond Dragon was the only life form that could provide it honey. Thus, in the Giant Icebear King's mind, the Diamond Dragon was equivalent to honey itself. How could it bear to watch its honey run away? It immediately stooped down, its four limbs racing across the ground as it chased after the

Diamond Dragon. There was absolutely no way it would let its honey escape!

Seeing the Giant Icebear King suddenly race out furiously, the other Giant Icebears automatically moved apart to open up a path. Any that moved late were inevitably sent flying out dozens of meters upon impact with the Giant Icebear King's charge.

Icebound Valley wasn't particularly large or small. It was at least several dozens of kilometers deep, but...with the Giant Icebear King's and the Diamond Dragon's speeds, this minor distance could be covered in a matter of ten minutes.

Finally...with the Diamond Dragon in front and the Giant Icebear King behind, the two bodies—one large, and one small—came plowing out of the valley one after another. Upon seeing how the Giant Icebear King was clearly over two times an average Giant Icebear's size, Suo Jia's heart couldn't help but begin to race. ****....this creature was undoubtedly the King of the Giant Icebears!

Suo Jia urgently ordered the little pet to stop. He didn't dare to let the Diamond Dragon bring that huge creature over before clarifying its intentions. Once it was within a perimeter of one hundred meters, it was equivalent to just handing his measly life over to the Giant Icebear King's hands; the range of trampling attack had a circumference of 100 meters!

Suo Jia swiftly pulled out a large barrel of honey and placed it on the ground, before he and the others quickly retreated to a distance over 200 meters away. Only then did Suo Jia command the Diamond Dragon to lead the Giant Icebear King over.

The dragon lightly landed on top of the giant barrel and gestured at the Giant Icebear King. However...although the barrel was lidded, there was still some honey stuck on the edges of the wooden barrel. After smelling this kind of aroma, the Giant Icebear King couldn't possibly pay any mind to the Diamond

Dragon. It abruptly leapt over and swallowed all the contents in the giant barrel of honey in a single gulp. If the Diamond Dragon hadn't dodged in a flash, it definitely would've been swallowed up as well.

Although the Giant Icebear King had a very large body, the volume of the honey barrel wasn't small either, nearing the size of a public trash can—the amount was equivalent to a person downing a keg of beer!

“Bang!” With a dull thud, the Giant Icebear King broke the wooden barrel with a single chomp. Immediately...the honey came rushing out like a tide, filling the Giant Icebear King's mouth. It was incomparably sweet, and that extremely thick and sugary honey stuck onto its tongue and between its teeth. This kind of taste was one that even gods would never trade away.

The most important thing to a magical beast was food; they regarded food as being above everything else. Things like territory and mates came after. For the sake of food, they could easily throw away their own territory and leave their partners. Food was their entire world.

Really, even humans were the same in that respect, especially young children. They would do anything for a mouthful of good food, and favor whoever gave them tastier food. Although this wasn't universal, it was the case most of the time.

After consuming that huge barrel of honey, the Giant Icebear King was like a human that had drunk a large cup of honey. With so much honey, its craving had been temporarily satisfied. It glanced at Suo Jia's party, but didn't seem to dare to get very far from the entrance of the valley. Its large body swayed a few times before it began to walk back towards Icebound Valley.

Suo Jia frowned in concern and asked Xiang Yun, “Is there really no problem with this? Will the Giant Icebear King really come looking for more honey to eat later, as you said?”

“Hehe...” With a smug smile, Xiang Yun replied, “Bears that haven’t eaten honey before would definitely have some sort of resistance against it. But bears that have tried it will definitely love the honey as much as their own lives. Don’t worry, after getting a taste of the honey, that thing’s resistance to honey will definitely get lower and lower. By the very end, it might even be willing to exchange its life for honey!”

“Mhmmmm....” In profound agreement, Roger nodded and praised, “That’s right, children wouldn’t be lustful because they’ve never experienced women before. Only after trying it would they stake even their lives to do a woman...”

“Shut up!” Nicole angrily shouted, her face automatically flushing bright red.

Suo Jia paused for a moment, blankly looking at Roger, and then back at Nicole. The next moment, Suo Jia couldn’t help but laugh out loud. Although Roger’s example had been inappropriate, it was an extremely close analogy. Indeed...only after having a taste would something become more enticing. But, were women really that amazing?

Suo Jia’s party set up tents, and, every day....Suo Jia would place a barrel of honey there, and the Giant Icebear King would come out every day to eat it. After a week, when the Giant Icebear King had appeared while drooling as per usual, it was shocked to discover that there was no more honey!

Chapter 351 – Difficult Transaction Pt. 2

To the Giant Icebear King, honey was like a drug. Having eaten it so heartily this whole time, wasn't its sudden disappearance basically equivalent to killing it? For a moment, the Giant Icebear King couldn't help but anxiously wander around outside the valley entrance, not knowing what to think.

Amidst its panic, Suo Jia's figure appeared not far from it. Seeing the familiar shadow of a human, the Giant Icebear King knew that the appearance of this person that had given it honey for nearly a week meant that there was definitely more honey to be eaten! While thinking this, the Giant Icebear King couldn't help but close its eyes happily.

Suo Jia involuntarily swallowed hard at the sight of the distant Giant Icebear King. Although from a typical nurturing standpoint, magical beasts wouldn't harm their trainers, this wasn't an absolute guarantee either. Moreover...Suo Jia had only been feeding this guy for a few days!

But, despite the danger, Suo Jia couldn't delay any longer. Time was precious, and he couldn't waste all his time here. This matter had to end as soon as possible!

Suo Jia gathered his courage and walked towards the Giant Icebear King. Shaking with fear, he stood right next to the bear. The Giant Icebear King didn't attack Suo Jia; rather, it just looked at Suo Jia longingly, hoping for him to hand over some honey.

At the sight of the Giant Icebear King, Suo Jia automatically began to pray to God to give this beast enough intelligence. Otherwise, there was no way they'd be able to communicate! A casual swat from this creature's paw was enough to crush Suo Jia into pulp; he had absolutely no countering ability.

Suo Jia nervously cleared his throat, gesturing as he spoke, "Respected Giant Icebear King, I can no longer continue to give

you honey for free. If you still want honey, give me something in exchange!”

“Mmm?” The Giant Icebear King looked at Suo Jia suspiciously. Although it didn’t understand Suo Jia’s words, his gestures could be understood for the most part. After all...these signs were the masterpiece their party of four had come up with after researching for a week. The Diamond Dragon could understand it with a single glance; as long as the Giant Icebear King wasn’t inferior in intelligence compared to the Diamond Dragon, it would be able to understand.

“Roar!” Under Suo Jia’s concerned gaze, the Giant Icebear King suddenly tilted its head back and roared at the sky. It fiercely crouched down, its bright, enormous, and extremely sharp teeth facing Suo Jia as it let out a low roar. Its meaning was clear: Hurry up and hand over the honey, or else I’ll bite you to death!

From this, Suo Jia could tell that they’d encountered a bandit. It was clear to see that magical beasts didn’t like trading, and would rather use force to resolve matters. Fortunately...Suo Jia had made plans for this a while ago, and didn’t bother staying in a deadlock with the Giant Icebear King. Instead, he directly pulled out a barrel of honey, and turned around to make his exit, leaving the Giant Icebear King happier than ever.

Although it was happy this time, the Giant Icebear King couldn’t find Suo Jia’s figure no matter how hard it searched when it arrived at the valley entrance the next day. Only now did the Giant Icebear King suddenly realize that relying on force would indeed pressure the other party to hand the honey over, but the other party could also just turn around and walk away. This meant that it would no longer receive honey to eat. Suo Jia was the source of honey; the Giant Icebear King would only be able to get a chance to eat it if Suo Jia was willing to hand it over. If the Icebear King made Suo Jia unhappy, he would leave without ever providing honey again.

The Giant Icebear King paced back and forth at the entrance anxiously for an entire day, but Suo Jia still didn't appear. Another day passed, and another after that, but there was still no trace of Suo Jia. When the Giant Icebear King thought back to the heavenly sweet taste of honey, it couldn't help but drool. However, there was nothing it could do.

Finally, the morning of the fourth day, Suo Jia appeared once more. Expressionlessly facing the Giant Icebear King, Suo Jia once again gestured as he spoke, "Alright, I'll give you one more chance. If you want to eat honey, hand over something in exchange!"

The Giant Icebear King still refused to compromise; it was just too hungry, and it viciously crouched down once more, letting out a fierce roar. No matter what, the honey had to be handed over as quickly as possible!

Suo Jia didn't panic at this. Either way, he did have the honey; it was really cheap, cheaper than Blazing Liquor, so it didn't matter how much the bear wanted to drink. This stupid bear still needed to be trained slowly! While thinking this, Suo Jia took out a new barrel of honey, and turned around to leave.

The Giant Icebear King's eyes lit up at the sight of the honey barrel, and swallowed its contents in one gulp. It had finally gotten the chance to taste the sweet honey once more. That rich flavor was enough to nearly bring the Giant Icebear King to tears.

However, while it was happily enjoying the honey, it suddenly noticed Suo Jia's figure slowly disappearing. Just then, it remembered: if Suo Jia left, who knew when he'd come again? What would it do about honey then?

With this, the Giant Icebear King first stamped once on the ground, successfully making Suo Jia dizzy. It then bounded up to Suo Jia, hoisted him up in its mouth, and turned around to run back into Icebound Valley.

Seeing this, the others' expressions couldn't help but change into

ones of horror, and they wildly chased after the Giant Icebear King back towards Icebound Valley. It was a pity that...before they'd progressed very far, they were scared witless by the other Giant Icebears and chased back out.

Facing this unexpected situation, the three of them surprisingly didn't solely panic. Instead, they sent the Diamond Dragon out to scout the situation. Only after confirming Suo Jia's life wasn't in danger would they be able to relax. No matter what happened, there was always hope as long as he didn't actually die.

The Giant Icebear King had run back to its own den—which was really in front of the prehistoric ruins—with Suo Jia in its mouth. It casually dropped him on the ground, and lazily laid down to sleep.

Suo Jia couldn't help but let loose a breath of relief at the sight of the Giant Icebear King before him. During the instant it had first moved just now, Suo Jia had thought he'd die for sure. Fortunately, the creature's intelligence didn't seem low after all. It had captured Suo Jia only for the sake of honey.

Suo Jia automatically turned his head to look around at his surroundings. The first thing he saw was the scene of densely packed Giant Icebears hundreds of meters away. Suo Jia knew very well that fleeing this place was just a pipe dream. The only way to enter or leave was by being carried in the Giant Icebear King's mouth.

Suo Jia turned around and looked behind him. The first thing that met his eyes was a huge shrine. At the moment...the entire shrine was covered in frost. Entering it required breaking through sturdy layers of ice dozens of meters thick. Otherwise, one could only look at it without ever going in.

As he was looking around, the sound of flapping wings could be heard from the air. Suo Jia doubtfully turned around and saw the Diamond Dragon's figure slowly flying over from the distance. Suo Jia pulled out a pen and paper and wrote a note for the Diamond

Dragon to deliver back, telling Xiang Yun, Roger, and Nicole that he was perfectly fine, and that they should patiently wait outside for a few days.

Chapter 352 – Trade Route's Secret Pt. 1

After eating honey, the Giant Icebear King practically seemed dead. Whenever it slept, it would sleep for an entire day, and, as soon as it awoke, it would ask Suo Jia for honey. In this kind of situation, Suo Jia didn't even bother trying to resist, and directly handed over the honey. Upon finishing its honey, the Giant Icebear King would contentedly sprawl back on the ground and continue sleeping without paying any further attention to Suo Jia.

When Suo Jia looked at how relaxed the Giant Icebear King was as it slept, he couldn't help but bitterly smile. He knew that the Giant Icebear King wasn't paying him any mind at all; it wasn't afraid of him running away or of him inflicting any harm to it. To the Giant Icebear King, Suo Jia was basically just a fly that provided honey.

Seeing the Giant Icebear King fall into deep slumber once more, Suo Jia refused to just stay idle. It was going to ignore him? Fine, he would take this chance to look around the shrine ruins. Although the sturdy ice blocking the way would keep others out, it definitely wouldn't be hard for an ice mage like Suo Jia to get through. After all, he was an expert that played around with ice!

Suo Jia found a dimly lit corner, and ordered the Diamond Dragon to enter its combat state. However...before the dragon had even started to knock at the ice, the Giant Icebear King woke up. Although the fluctuations from the Diamond Dragon's magic power weren't very great, the Giant Icebear King's acute senses still swiftly detected them. This was its den, how could it not stay alert?

Seeing the Giant Icebear King awaken, Suo Jia was alarmed and had no choice but to command the Diamond Dragon to directly drop its combat state. By the time the Giant Icebear King had rushed over in a frenzy, Suo Jia was carrying the little pet, sitting on a pile of sturdy ice with a content expression, showing no signs

of abnormality.

The Giant Icebear King looked suspiciously at Suo Jia, and then back at the little pet. Most likely thinking that it had just been dreaming, it turned around and walked back to lie down and continue sleeping.

Suo Jia let out a breath of relief at the sight of the Giant Icebear King falling into slumber once more. Fortunately, although it had a certain level of intelligence, its mind was a bit simple, perhaps because it slept too much. It hadn't been able to detect that the ice from underneath Suo Jia was actually the Glacial Armor the Diamond Dragon had produced in its combat state.

Suo Jia's gaze remained on the sleeping Giant Icebear King. He knew that relying on the Diamond Dragon to chip away the ice wasn't possible anymore. However...Suo Jia's calculations were not that poor. In the blink of an eye, Suo Jia pulled out Baltic from his interspatial ring, and quickly assembled it.

Soon afterwards, a large mining tool appeared in Baltic's hands. This tool wasn't used to pick ice, but rather, to gather ores from mines. It was extremely sharp, and also very effective.

After setting up Baltic, Suo Jia also found another remote corner hidden from sight for Baltic to probe around before it began to spin the drill-like tool in its hands, drilling towards the sturdy ice layers.

The ice sealing off the shrine was probably over 30 meters thick. Ice of this thickness theoretically should've taken a few days to chip away, but Baltic didn't know the concept of exhaustion. Moreover, it also had the tool that Suo Jia had personally designed; if its work efficiency was just average, it would still only need one day and night to successfully carve out a 30 meter long passageway through the layers of ice.

Although Suo Jia wanted to immediately squeeze through the tunnel and look around the shrine, but the Giant Icebear King soon

awoke again. With a lack of better option, Suo Jia stored away Baltic, and returned to the Giant Icebear King's side. After it awoke again the next morning and ate another large barrel of honey, it fell into a deep sleep once more. Only then did Suo Jia gather the courage to rush back over to the shrine.

After passing through the two meter diameter tunnel, Suo Jia finally entered the shrine. The rays of sunlight from the early morning were reflected off of the thick ice layers. Under the hazy glow, the glimmering shrine appeared before Suo Jia's eyes.

There was an inspiring sculpture across the shrine entrance. It was a two meter tall god wearing divine leather armor on its robust body. One hand gripped a trident while the other was rested on its knee. It was sitting in a dignified pose, and its bright, forward gaze made it seem as if it were alive.

Although it looked to be alive, Suo Jia knew that this thing wasn't a real person, but instead was carved out from a precious metal. It was just a statue; in fact, Suo Jia could carve something similar, although it wouldn't be as god-like.

As Suo Jia was looking around, his body involuntarily shuddered as his gaze quickly locked onto the ground before the carving. There...a pile of some creature's bones was kneeling. Judging from its pose, it looked as if it was praying to the sculpture!

Suo Jia cautiously advanced further into the main hall. Using the hazy rays of light shining in from outside, Suo Jia was shocked to discover that there were ten skeletons piled there. From their bulkiness and their physique, Suo Jia suspected them to be skeletons of Giant Icebears; moreover, these were skeletons of past Giant Icebear Kings!

Suo Jia's eyes lit up, and he quickly ran over to one of the skeletons to find the large skull amidst the bones. He reached his hand into the pile of bones to pull out an egg-sized, ball-shaped object emitting a dim blue glow!

Suo Jia trembled as he looked at the ball-shaped item in his hand. He now knew, without a doubt, that this was a Giant Icebear King's skeleton, because only they could condense together such a large rank nine monster core. This time, the Diamond Dragon was in great luck!

Without daring to waste any time, Suo Jia quickly ran to the other nine skeletons to pull out rank nine monster cores from the skulls, gathering ten of these egg-sized cores in total!

Suo Jia excitedly pocketed them, and continued to probe around the shrine, but, even after looking around for a long while, Suo Jia didn't discover anything else. Since Suo Jia's aptitude in magic automatons and mechanisms couldn't discover anything, he could basically conclude that there were no usable mechanisms to speak of here.

Suo Jia's gaze finally landed back onto that sculpture. It didn't actually draw Suo Jia's attention, as it was just a metal carving, but the trident it wielded in its hand attracted him!

This trident was completely azure in color. It had a deep blue gem embedded at the bottom that radiated a faint, blue glow under the sun's rays. When one looked a bit closer, there seemed to be something moving within it!

Suo Jia unconsciously moved closer to inspect the gemstone better, and looked straight at the round, blue gem. His eyes were practically glued onto the gem's walls as he intently stared into it.

Finally, Suo Jia was able to clearly discern the inner contents of the stone, and he couldn't help but gasp sharply. Right now... before Suo Jia's eyes was not the gemstone's original body, but a strange transformation had occurred, and Suo Jia had completely lost track of his own body.

The instant Suo Jia's gaze had crossed with the gem's walls, Suo Jia saw a flash before his eyes, and a boundless sea with surging waves appeared. The roaring ocean with its blue water and violent

movements incited towering waves, one after another.

Suo Jia understood that this wasn't just a gem that looked like an ocean, as he'd seen a true ocean before. Right now, the one in Suo Jia's vision was identical to the one in his memories. The only differences were that it was deeper, more restless, and vaster!

The sea wasn't something calm, nor was it desolate. Rather, it was the opposite; there were large, magnificent glaciers floating atop the raging waves. Each of these glaciers was larger than Suo Jia, some an overwhelmingly large size!

Suo Jia sweated profusely at the images of the glaciers in his mind. What in the world was this? Why had these scenes appeared before him? They couldn't be...illusions, right?

Suo Jia's eyes snapped open and tiredly wiped the sweat off his forehead. What exactly was this, why was it so terrifying?! There was actually a surging ocean hidden within this tiny gemstone!

Suo Jia stretched out a trembling hand to grasp the sparkling hilt of the trident that seemed to be carved out of the blue gemstone and pulled on it slightly...and with an indescribable feeling, the trident in the statue's hand ended up in Suo Jia's hands.

Suo Jia gaped at the trident in astonishment. Although he didn't understand what all of this meant, Suo Jia was certain that this was an amazing treasure. However, who would be able to tell him its exact identity?

Chapter 353 – Trade Route's Secret Pt. 2

Sensing the trident in his hands, Suo Jia's heart fluttered. He could vaguely conclude that, even it wasn't a Divine Artifact, it was definitely a sub-Divine Artifact. Even Epic ranked magic equipment sets had never given him this kind of feeling before.

Without wasting time, Suo Jia quickly opened his interspatial ring to store away the trident. Then...Suo Jia gave the main hall one final sweep before swiftly leaving. Although he hadn't stayed in the shrine for a long time, who knew whether the Giant Icebear King would suddenly wake up or not. If it did and discovered Suo Jia's tracks, what would the consequences be?

With this short sweep, Suo Jia hadn't been very hopeful in detecting anything. The main hall had already been surveyed by him for a while. If there was anything, he wouldn't be discovering it only now. However...this quick check had actually resulted in Suo Jia noticing something he'd overlooked before.

As mentioned before, the sculpture sitting there had a trident in one hand, with the other hand pressed on its knee. Before, because Suo Jia had been far away, he hadn't noticed anything. Now that he'd looked closer, there was clearly an opened book underneath the hand on its knee...

Suo Jia's eyes shone in excitement, and he quickly pulled the book out. After examining the area once more, and confirming that there was nothing else, he hurriedly left the shrine and crawled back through the tunnel.

Upon leaving the ice tunnel, Suo Jia anxiously activated his water manipulation to fill up the 30 meter long tunnel with an ice stream. He then turned around and rushed back to where the Giant Icebear King was.

Fortunately, the Giant Icebear King had been sleeping for most of the time. Even if Suo Jia had been gone for a while, it hadn't

woken up. Seeing how comfortably the Giant Icebear King was sleeping, Suo Jia let out a breath of relief. This time, he had finally done something with his time instead of wasting it. Suo Jia had not only gained 10 rank nine monster cores, but a nameless weapon as well. It could be said that he'd completed the objective of his journey to Icebound Valley.

After a stretch, Suo Jia excitedly paced around back and forth for a long while before suddenly freezing in his tracks. He turned around to look over in astonishment at the pack of Giant Icebears off in the distance...

Only now had Suo Jia suddenly realized a major problem: he'd entered as he'd wanted to, and had obtained what he'd desired as well. But how was he supposed to leave? The Giant Icebear King might not kill him because of the honey, but it definitely wouldn't let him out! Even if it did, Suo Jia wouldn't have the ability to leave by himself.

Suo Jia anxiously paced back and forth until the next morning, yet he still wasn't able to think of a solution. He powerlessly gave another barrel of honey to the Giant Icebear King, before sitting down on the icy ground in despair.

Suo Jia opened his interspatial ring to rummage through it and look for any items that would help him escape this predicament, but wasn't able to find a single thing. Suo Jia helplessly began to flip through books as well to look through alchemy techniques that could allow someone to make a magic tool that could grant the ability to fly!

After searching through dozens of books, Suo Jia was disappointed to discover that there wasn't any magic tool like that at all. However...he didn't give up, and continued to read. He opened the interspatial ring once more, and pulled out a faded book.

"Hmm?" Suo Jia stared at the somewhat familiar book in his

hands, not remembering when he'd gotten this book. All alchemy books had red skins, without exception.

After staring blankly at it for a long time, Suo Jia finally remembered. Wasn't this the book he'd gotten from the sculpture's hand yesterday? He'd been too worried about the Giant Icebear King waking up the other day, so he hadn't looked at it closely, and had eventually forgotten about it.

When Suo Jia inspected it, he discovered words written on the grey cover: Psychic Technique! Suo Jia looked at these words in confusion and furrowed his brows; he'd never heard of any magics like this before. What exactly did it mean?

Suo Jia flipped through the pages, and saw flamboyant cursive script. Upon careful inspection, Suo Jia's jaw dropped further and further down...

This shrine was called the Sea God's Shrine. It was erected to worship the God of the Sea, Poseidon, and the object the sculpture had in its hands was the Divine Artifact passed down through the Sea Gods: the Sea God's Trident!

The Sea God, Poseidon, from the ancient Greek myths, was a god that controlled the ocean, earthquakes, and horses. He was the son of Kronos and Rhea, Zeus's brother. He reigned over the realm of water with a trident in hand, and steered a golden chariot over the seas. He often used the trident to smash open rock cliffs, to call the wind, and to summon the rain.

Poseidon was one of the 12 main gods of Olympus, and his Roman name was Neptune, the king of oceans among the giant planets. He and Zeus prevailed over their father, Kronos, and split the world together. He was in charge of the oceans, and dominated the waters with his trident, holding absolutely authority over anything in the waters. He was the one that shook the earth.

The Sea God's Trident, according to legends, was the weapon that Poseidon used. To humans, any weapon used by a god was

called a Divine Artifact. In other words, it was one of the ten Divine Artifacts that had been passed down to the human realm!

The trident had the Water God's Diamond embedded in it, and it could utilize earth-shaking abilities. As for its exact functions, these were still a mystery. According to records, no human had ever used the Water God's Trident before!

Of course, these Divine Artifacts didn't mean that they were necessarily weapons owned by main gods. In reality, any equipment used by a god counted as a Divine Artifact. Some were weapons, some were jewelry.

According to the records in the book, obtaining this trident meant going through the test of passing the tens of thousands of rank nine Giant Icebears, and killing the Giant Icebear King. Only then would one be able to get near the shrine, and take the Sea God's Trident.

Suo Jia couldn't help but sigh. Actually, even having a large amount of people wouldn't help in defeating these Giant Icebear Kings. To eliminate these powerful creatures, one would at least need a sub-god level ability. Only sub-god level warriors would have the qualifications to use this Sea God's Trident!

But it was very clear to see that the person that had established the shrine was not Poseidon, rather, it was just a sub-god. Although the architecture had been very comprehensive and was extremely tight, there was still a bit that had been overlooked, allowing Suo Jia to drill a hole through.

Upon reading the introduction in this book, Suo Jia began to tremble. As he continued to read, he found that the book's records clearly stated that those Giant Icebears had been controlled by the sub-gods using this Psychic Technique, and then similarly commanded to guard the shrine. This continued generation after generation, until someone breached the shrine.

This Psychic Technique was a unique magic passed down from

the Sea God. Using this magic, humans could telepathically communicate with other creatures, and exchange words. The Sea God could control the seas, which covered 75% of the earth's surface. There were countless types of animals in the oceans; without this Psychic Technique, how could they act as a Sea God?

Flipping over another page, Suo Jia continued to read that there were a total of thirteen checkpoints on the Greater Trade Routes. The first nine were open, while the latter four were hidden. Each checkpoint contained a main god's shrine, and within each shrine was a Divine Artifact that had been used by a main god, which able users could use.

After receiving these Divine Artifacts, one would become a spokesperson of the gods, and bravely continue charging forwards until the thirteenth checkpoint. A warrior that passed through all thirteen would be able to engage in a challenge to obtain the Godhead passed down from the gods of the past, and become the new Titan.

Suo Jia's trembling did not stop as he continued to flip through the book. There was also a description of the Giant Icebears written within. It turned out that...average Giant Icebears were rank nine creatures, but the Giant Icebear King was a rank ten, peak-level magical beast! Whenever they were about to die, they would break through the ice layers and kneel before Poseidon's statue to await their deaths!

Suo Jia was astonished to discover that, from this description, the Giant Icebears were similar to the Diamond Dragons. The average Diamond Dragons were rank 10 creatures, but the Diamond Dragon King surpassed all other magical beasts, and could no longer be categorized as rank 10.

Suo Jia was so excited that he nearly shouted out into the air. He hadn't thought that these monster cores in the shrine were not only rank nine, but rank 10. No wonder they were so large in size and so full of energy! This time, the Diamond Dragon had really

struck gold.

Chapter 354 – Relay Station Regulations Pt.

1

Suo Jia let out a long sigh after reading the introduction to the shrine and the entire Greater Trade Routes, then continued to look through the book. Now...this extremely thick book only had one page left. Most of the beginning was all introducing things, without actually containing any information about the so-called Psychic Technique!

Upon flipping to the final page, finally...an usual magic array, as well as some additional notes, appeared before him. A quick glance was enough for Suo Jia to confirm that this thing really was an internal system magic!

This Psychic Technique actually used a special method that allowed the user and the receiver of the magic to mentally connect with each other and telepathically communicate. This didn't require words or body language to be used.

After looking at it more closely a few times, once Suo Jia had finally confirmed that there were no errors, he let down the Diamond Dragon in his arms, so that it was sitting opposite him, and closed his eyes, activating the magic using the method described in the records.

Following activation, a pale blue, eye-shaped array appeared on top of Suo Jia's forehead. The next moment...Suo Jia suddenly opened his eyes, and a psychic shockwave surged outwards, swiftly rushing towards the Diamond Dragon.

An indescribable feeling arose in Suo Jia's mind. Without a single word or movement, Suo Jia was able to understand what the Diamond Dragon opposite him was thinking. In addition, the Diamond Dragon could also read Suo Jia's thoughts. In that moment, both of them were completely stunned by this amazing feeling!

That wasn't all. Suo Jia was shocked to discover that the most mystical part was not only did he know what the Diamond Dragon was thinking, he could even sense its body condition, its mood fluctuations, and could even see himself through the Diamond Dragon's eyes, as well as feel the surrounding air currents through the Diamond Dragon's skin!

At the moment, Suo Jia was no longer a human. He felt like both the Diamond Dragon and himself, as if their souls had connected and become one. Their minds thought and observed simultaneously. This kind of feeling was truly wondrous!

Finally, Suo Jia severed the psychic connection, and stared at the dazed Diamond Dragon across from him. Suo Jia couldn't help but feel reluctant about ending it; this feeling was really too fantastic. However...in this dangerous situation, Suo Jia couldn't possibly take any risks.

After getting a grasp of the Psychic Technique, Suo Jia stowed away the book. He had a strong urge to take out the trident to properly study it and get a better look at the so-called Divine Artifact to figure out exactly what godly abilities it had. Unfortunately...Suo Jia couldn't guarantee that the Giant Icebear King wouldn't sense it, or what its resulting reaction would be.

For lack of a better option, Suo Jia could only quietly wait. Now that he possessed the Psychic Technique, Suo Jia believed that, by tomorrow morning, he'd be able to properly communicate with the Giant Icebear King.

Time quickly flew by. In the blink of an eye, it was already the next morning. Finally...with a rumble, the Giant Icebear King lazily opened its eyes, turning to look over in Suo Jia's direction, and drool instantly began to flow down from its mouth; this guy had probably been dreaming of eating honey!

Suo Jia faced the Giant Icebear King and calmed himself as he closed his eyes. With a flash of pale blue light, the blue eye once

again appeared on Suo Jia's forehead, and Suo Jia's thoughts were finally able to connect with the Giant Icebear King's.

"Hmm?" Suo Jia shot a doubtful look at the Giant Icebear King opposite him, and was shocked to discover that he could only touch the Giant Icebear King's thoughts and read its mind. Suo Jia was completely unable to sense the Giant Icebear King's bodily condition.

After contemplating for a while, Suo Jia realised that this Psychic Technique also depended on the partner. Suo Jia and the Diamond Dragon had reached such an advanced stage of communication because they mutually trusted each other completely and unconditionally. Otherwise, they couldn't have reached such a powerful state.

However, the Giant Icebear King was different. From beginning to end, it maintained its intent to be Suo Jia's enemy, keeping its mental guard up. Thus, although Suo Jia wanted to sense other aspects of the Giant Icebear King's condition, he'd definitely be blocked, therefore success was impossible.

Fortunately, Suo Jia didn't really want to understand too much either. As long as they could communicate, everything was okay. Suo Jia used the psychic ability to say to the Giant Icebear King, "Old friend, I can give you honey, lots of it, but...I don't have much left. Can you bring me out of the valley? Don't worry, I'll definitely keep bringing you honey periodically. I can guarantee that you'll have sweet honey to eat every day!"

After reading Suo Jia's thoughts, the Giant Icebear King glanced at Suo Jia, then nodded. The concept of lying didn't exist to a wild beast, just like how an animal's actions while hunting didn't contain any false movements. Thus, it didn't even understand what lying was.

Since Suo Jia was willing to hand over honey, and even go as far as to promise to provide honey every day for it to eat, it had no

reason to refuse to let Suo Jia go. The Giant Icebear King also knew that the honey wasn't produced by Suo Jia. If it wanted to eat honey forever, it would have to keep Suo Jia alive.

Suo Jia couldn't help but feel excited by the Giant Icebear King's compliance, and began to pull out barrel after barrel of honey and pile them together in front of him. Suo Jia then walked up to the Giant Icebear King, and telepathically said, "Alright, this is all the honey on me. If you eat one a day, it'll last you two to three years. If you still want to eat more, I have to go out and ship some over. That's why...you should bring me out now. Otherwise, your companions will eat me as their snack, and you won't have anymore honey to eat."

The Giant Icebear King automatically nodded, and, through the connection, told Suo Jia to jump onto its back so that it could bring him out.

Suo Jia hadn't imagined that the Giant Icebear King would be so agreeable. Excited, Suo Jia jumped onto the Giant Icebear King's back with the Diamond Dragon in his arms, and they rushed out of the valley. In reality, magical beasts were all like this; as long as they understood one's intents, they were innocent and cute.

From his seat on the Giant Icebear King's back, Suo Jia looked around at the passing scenery in somewhat high spirits. Before they'd traveled very far, Suo Jia's eyes suddenly lit up in glee as he spotted the fruit on the surrounding trees!

"Wait! Please wait!" With an abrupt shout, Suo Jia pressed down slightly with his feet, and leapt onto one of the large trees. Under closer examination, there were smaller plants growing on the tree trunk. Each of the plants had a snow lotus-like flower growing on top, with a brilliantly sparkling fruit in the middle!

That's right, without a mistake, these were Freezing fruits. With Spirit Eye, Suo Jia observed his surroundings. That wasn't the most exciting part, though. Suo Jia was elated to discover that

there were mutated Freezing fruits, as well as Control fruits, in large numbers as well! All ranks from 1 to 10 were present!

Suo Jia obviously wasn't willing to leave empty-handed. His hand quickly pulled out the Ten Thousand Year Ice Box, and filled half of it with Freezing fruits, and half with Control fruits, before stopping and jumping back onto the Giant Icebear King's back to continue rushing out of the valley.

The Giant Icebear King didn't pay any mind to Suo Jia's actions; these were just wild plants that weren't even uncommon. As long as the shrine wasn't touched, everything was fine.

Suo Jia elatedly said to the Diamond Dragon, "Little pet, remember this place. If we run out of fruits in the future, we'll come here to get some. Hehe...either way, you can fly. Like this, we never have to be afraid of running out!"

The Diamond Dragon's eyes closed happily, and it nodded. Although its IQ wasn't very high, it understood the importance of the Freezing fruit. A wild beast's intuition was enough to sense that fact.

Throughout the journey, Suo Jia would constantly sigh in wonder at the Freezing fruits and Control fruits that could be seen throughout Icebound Valley. The reason why there were so many fruits here was simple, really: this place was too dangerous for people to come and pick them. In contrast, 400,000 people would pass through the area outside Icebound Valley every day, to the point where discovering a single one was already quite difficult.

Upon returning to Icebound City, Suo Jia's group spent three days rushing back to Prairie Fire City. After filling all of their interspatial rings with Blazing Liquor, they finally began to rush towards the first checkpoint.

This checkpoint wasn't a city wall or anything. Actually, if one wanted to reach the second checkpoint of the Greater Trade Routes, they had to take a boat out. The second checkpoint was on

an island around a hundred kilometers away from the coast.

After a few days of swift traveling, Suo Jia's group finally reached the second relay station of the Greater Trade Routes, Haise City. Upon entering the city, Suo Jia's party felt a ton of malicious gazes aimed at them. When they examined their surroundings more closely, they realized that most of the people in Haise City were adventurers, and there were at least 1000 of them in total.

Chapter 355 – Relay Station Regulations Pt.

2

Although they could feel these glares of ill intent, none of these people made any moves, so Suo Jia's party naturally couldn't initiate an attack either. It didn't matter how powerful Suo Jia's party was, there was no way that a single group could go against thousands of people! Moreover, these thousands of people were only outside the relay station, who knew how many more adventurers there were throughout the entire area.

Suo Jia's party didn't dare waste any time, and they headed straight to the administration building to submit ten trust certificates in exchange for one ship ticket. This single ticket was enough for them to sit on the weekly ship to go to the second checkpoint of the Greater Trade Routes.

However...although owning the ticket granted one the qualifications to head towards the second checkpoint, it was not a guarantee that they'd be able to get onto the ship; that depended on their own abilities. Each ship could only transport one group of people at a time. With so many groups gathered here, how were they supposed to get to their destination?

After stuffing the ticket away, Suo Jia's party left the administration building with frowns on their faces. As soon as they exited the building, an extremely robust fellow covered in scars came over to them and coldly called out, "Oi! Newbies...follow me!"

Suo Jia stared at the brawny guy in front of them while restraining the explosive Roger back, and calmly replied, "May I ask for your identity? Why do we have to follow you?"

Having most likely gotten used to such responses, the large guy indifferently responded, "You guys must've heard just now that only one ship goes out every week. But at the moment, there are

over 500 groups stuck here. Thus...all the groups here have reached a consensus on some conditions; if you guys don't come with me, I can guarantee that you'll never be able to get to the second checkpoint!"

Suo Jia nodded, quickly understanding the meaning of these words. Because the ship was only once a week, the selection of which group having the right to take the ship had become a focal point. If this wasn't managed properly, they'd definitely end up massacring each other until the land was filled with rivers of blood. For this reason...the groups had all reached an agreement. Only parties that complied with certain conditions would have the right to take the weekly ship to the checkpoint.

Suo Jia nodded and agreed, "Alright. In that case, I will trouble you to please lead the way!"

The thick-bodied man didn't say anything more. With a nod, he turned around and began to head towards a large building...

Following his lead, Suo Jia's party entered the huge structure right across the administration building. At single glance, one could only see an extremely lazy and bored worker sitting inside a spacious room, looking as if he was half asleep.

Seeing Suo Jia's party arrive, the worker finally gathered some energy to welcome them, gesturing at them to take a seat on the ring-shaped sofa nearby. He then got some people to bring over some tea and desserts.

With a smile, the worker said in clear voice, "I'll cut the superfluous stuff, and just give a simple introduction of the agreement that 546 groups reached."

The worker paused for a moment before continuing, "In order to avoid unnecessary injury, the 546 adventure groups made a pact. The first week of every month, there is a public martial arts competition gathering. From the semifinals, four powerful groups are selected to have the privilege of sitting on the four ships in that

month to go to the second checkpoint!”

“Oh?” Suo Jia curiously asked, “This pact is indeed appropriate. Not only will it avoid injury, it also complies to everyone’s request to speak through their martial prowess. But is this competition a group competition or an individual competition?”

The worker smiled and replied, “Of course it’s an individual competition. If it were a group competition, there would definitely still be a great amount of casualties occurring. In addition, the pact also dictates that no killing can happen during the competition. As soon as someone is killed, the responsible group cannot participate in the competition, and similarly, not pass through the checkpoint, for another three years!”

Suo Jia nodded in understanding. “So that’s how it is. Then may I also ask, can the quota for being able to pass through be transferred to other groups?”

The worker replied, “Theoretically, it is allowed. However...the groups that have fulfilled the quota cannot participate in the competition within another half a year afterwards to curb groups from relying on large amounts of wealth and rare items.”

Suo Jia felt reassured, “Alright, thanks for your introduction. Which four groups have the right to pass through this month?”

“Hm...” The worker thought for a bit before replying, “It’s already the second week. The next ship leaves the day after tomorrow. The first group has already left, so the other remaining three that have yet to leave are...”

Suo Jia pulled out a small book and swiftly noted them down. The three groups that possessed the privilege to take the ship were Ice Moon, Berserk, and Rocket!

After Suo Jia finished recording this, he stood up and said to the worker, “I’m very thankful for your explanation. We still have some stuff to do, so we won’t bother you any longer.”

The worker quickly picked up a form on the table and passed it to Suo Jia. “There is a list of all the matters you must take notice of on this form. You guys must be careful to not break any rules. Otherwise, you’ll have to suffer from 546 adventurer groups hunting you down!”

Suo Jia nodded and sincerely accepted the form. This was no joking matter, if they really ended up being chased by all those people, they’d be doomed. No matter how formidable a group was, they couldn’t possibly be an opponent of 546 other groups; that number was enough to wear them down to death. Moreover...all those that could enter the Greater Trade Routes were hegemons from various countries. No weaklings existed.

Under Suo Jia’s lead, the four people left the building. Seeing how extremely confident Suo Jia looked, Nicole asked curiously, “Boss, why aren’t you the slightest bit worried? Don’t tell me... we’re just going to end up being stuck here?”

“Hehe...” As soon as Nicole finished speaking, Roger laughed heartily, “Even if we don’t want to wait, we still have to. However, be rest assured, if I go out to the competition next month as our group’s representative, we’ll definitely win the right to take the boat!”

“Tch...” Xiang Yun tsked in disdain. “On what basis should you be participating in the competition. Don’t tell me...you think that you’re the strongest in our group?”

Roger’s entire face flushed red upon hearing Xiang Yun’s jeer, and he shut his mouth. Although he wanted to argue back, Xiang Yun’s level was indeed a bit higher than his. At the very least, he wasn’t able to catch up to Xiang Yun yet.

Suo Jia swept a glance over all three of them and said in a low voice, “No, we won’t wait. Time is so tight, we can’t waste it here. We must head out this month!”

Suo Jia turned around and continued, “Xiang Yun, you go find

Ice Moon. Roger, go find Berserk, and Nicole, go find Rocket. Tell their group leaders that tonight, I, Suo Jia, will be treating them to a meal. If they don't arrive, then they will be making an enemy out of me, and any enemy of mine will definitely die a miserable death!"

Xiang Yun, Roger, and Nicole simultaneously inhaled sharply, and stared at Suo Jia in disbelief. After a long while, Xiang Yun hesitantly asked, "Captain, are you serious?"

Suo Jia nodded profoundly, and firmly declared, "That's right, I'm definitely serious. If they don't show respect, don't hesitate to show a special skill to intimidate them so that they know of our importance!"

Chapter 356 – One Step Forwards, One Step Back Pt. 1

Nicole calmly sat at the table. Although it was already filled with various dishes, nobody had made any move to go eat them.

Suo Jia swept a glance around and said in a low voice, “Did you all pass on your messages? How did they respond?”

Xiang Yun was the first to reply to Suo Jia’s words. “I passed it on. Those guys even ignored me at first, but...after I split a bottomless, dozen meter long crevice into the ground with my blade, their jaws all dropped wide open!”

Roger chuckled and added, “I also got my words across. However, I used a kick to smash a 30 meter tall limestone sculpture into powder to make them shut their mouths.”

“Hehe...” Nicole smiled and chimed in, “I also encountered a similar situation. They didn’t pay any mind to me at first, but that wasn’t an issue. I stealthily snuck into their boss’s bedroom and used a dagger to carve the appointed date and time into the wall.”

“Mmmm....” Suo Jia nodded in satisfaction. He knew that after these kinds of moves were revealed, those other parties had no choice but to come. Even if they believed they could defeat Suo Jia’s group in a fight, it was impossible to do so unscathed. Most importantly, having received such a provocation, they definitely wanted to come and regain their face. If they didn’t, wouldn’t it mean that they were afraid of Suo Jia?

Suddenly, the sound of jumbled footsteps from at least 50 people could be heard from outside heading towards the room. With a smile, Suo Jia leaned back in his chair. He knew that the three groups had most likely joined together. However, Suo Jia wasn’t particularly concerned about it.

“Bang!” With a violent boom, the carved wooden doors were

suddenly burst open. Shattered pieces were sent flying through the air towards Suo Jia's party.

Seeing this, Suo Jia's gaze hardened. With a stomp of his right foot, a row of diamond-like icicles neatly pushed out of the ground towards the side to block all the wooden shards.

The people outside the room couldn't help but be shocked by this sight, and they hurriedly dodged to the side. Due to the Diamond Charge, that entire wall of the room immediately disappeared. In that moment, the inside of the room was revealed before all the enemies.

Suo Jia shot a quick glance outside. It was just as he'd guessed; there were three groups, and under the lead of the three group captains, they'd completely blocked the doorway. There were around 50 people in total.

Originally, if things had gone the way the three groups had intended, they definitely would've charged straight in and grabbed these extremely audacious fellows. After all, in their view, no matter how powerful this party was, there were only four of them. With this greater than 4:1 ratio, wasn't an easy victory within their grasp?

However, Suo Jia revealing just one of his moves had made everyone realize that the situation wasn't actually that simple. Based on the strength he'd displayed, aside from the few group leaders, everyone else was basically just cannon fodder to Suo Jia. As a mage, there was no way he'd be afraid of going against a larger number of people. One AOE magic attack was enough to send anyone lacking in strength down to play in Hell!

Suo Jia raised his voice to speak to the stunned crowd at the door, "Since the three great group leaders have already arrived, why not come in and take a seat? Don't tell me...you don't dare to do anything without being surrounded by your group of men?"

The three captains couldn't help but inhale sharply at Suo Jia's

comment that had pushed them to the edge. If they sent their lackeys to attack now, wouldn't that be equivalent to proving Suo Jia's words correct? Wouldn't they then become spineless cowards that only relied on their subordinates?

The three captains exchanged glances with each other, then laughed out loud. Together, they strode into the room—which was now missing a wall—and without saying another word, sat down in the remaining three seats.

Suo Jia smiled at them and raised a jug of wine, personally filling their glasses to the brim. He then warmly said, "Perhaps you three have some kind of misunderstanding. The reason I invited you all here today was simply because I wanted to discuss something with you. I had no intention of becoming your enemy."

One of the captains roared out indignantly, "Who invites people like that? You dared to brazenly threaten us at our own doorsteps, did you think that we didn't have sufficient forces?!"

Suo Jia indifferently met their gazes and replied, "If I didn't do so, would all of you have been so willing to come meet me? If you didn't come to see me, then my face would be damaged, and wouldn't it become a killing fest where one of us must die? Really...I just wanted to arouse some minor commotion."

The captains fell silent at these words. If Suo Jia hadn't made a move earlier, they would still be fearless. But, after seeing all that, they knew that Suo Jia alone was enough to inflict serious injuries on them. Even if they went to the second checkpoint, they probably wouldn't be able to do much by then.

One of them spoke up, "Cut the bullshit. The past has passed. Go ahead and tell us, for what purpose have you called all of us here?"

Suo Jia slowly took a sip of his wine and calmly answered, "Actually, it's nothing big. I was just interested in the travel privileges you have. I wanted to see which group would be willing to give that travel right to us!"

“What!!!” The three captains suddenly leapt up and hostilely shouted, “Brat! Although you have some strength, don’t act too arrogant. Even if we lose all our stakes today, we will definitely end your measly lives here!”

Xiang Yun, Roger, and Nicole immediately jumped up as well and adopted aggressive stances. They warily watched the captains, complaints racing through their heads. Suo Jia was clearly just stirring up trouble. No matter how powerful the three of them were, they couldn’t possibly go up against 50 opponents!

At the moment, the atmosphere in the room was still mostly peaceful. Suo Jia alone played around with the wine glass in his hand and calmly said, “I’m not forcing any of you, I just wanted to make a purchase. I’ll hand over a million Trade Route coins to buy your ship tickets.”

“Tch...” One of the captains tsked in disdain, “F**k your million Trade Route coins. Let me tell you, you’re naive for thinking that you can buy the ship tickets!”

Suo Jia’s expression didn’t change despite the captain’s acerbic tone. “A million isn’t enough? Then two million.”

“Pfft!” Another captain spat out in contempt, “Yeah right, we’ve already told you that we don’t care about money!”

“Three million!” Suo Jia leisurely responded.

One of the captains shot a helpless look at Suo Jia and said, “Why don’t you understand? This isn’t a matter of money!”

“Four million!” Suo Jia’s tone still didn’t waver at all.

The expressions of the three captains finally changed. They exchanged a few looks with each other, but still firmly replied, “Although you’re proposing such a large amount...”

“Five million!” Suo Jia was still as calm as if he was just idly making some small chat.

“You...you’re just using money to pressure us!” One of the captains trembled. It was clear that this much money was enough to shake them!

“Six million!” Suo Jia indifferently played with the glass in his hand, not even bothering to look over at the three captains across from him.

“Deal!” As soon as Suo Jia finished speaking, one of the captains quickly replied, as if afraid Suo Jia would take his words back.

Suo Jia looked up, a victorious grin on his face, and he calmly stated, “Finally, someone clever. Actually, you guys should all know that passing the checkpoint or not isn’t important. Increasing your strengths is the ultimate Way. With six million, I’m sure you have enough money to boost the strengths of everyone in your group by several fold!”

The other two captains were stunned in silence for a bit, but they eventually understood as well. Suo Jia was right...strength was the only thing that mattered in the Greater Trade Routes, so was there even a difference between passing and failing at the checkpoints? To refuse so much money before them just to pass the checkpoint a few months earlier was simply idiocy. With six million, the group’s strength would be greatly boosted by however many magic fruits they wanted. They’d miscalculated, really miscalculated!

Chapter 357 – One Step Forwards, One Step Back Pt. 2

A few days later, Suo Jia's party finally stepped onto the ship going to the second checkpoint. The white sail billowed in the sea breeze, pushing against the mast, and sending the boat out to the depths of the ocean. After spending a long time of half a year, Suo Jia's party had finally passed the checkpoint successfully.

At the same exact time Suo Jia's party had departed from the first checkpoint, a group of crimson figures appeared at the edge of Tagan Desert outside the Greater Trade Routes. After crossing through the desert swirling with golden sand, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes had finally made their first step into the Greater Trade Routes.

After treading through that ugly mountain range, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes saw the sea of Thorn Mice. However...there was no way they'd pay any mind to the Thorn Mice's attacks. They directly plunged into the sea of mice like a small boat splitting apart surging waves, slashing them into halves. Within a single day, they managed to rush to the relay station.

They swiftly found the relay station master, and Duo Mei asked impatiently, "Mister, can you tell me if any merchant group pass through here about half a year ago?"

The relay station master smiled back and nodded. "You're probably referring to Suo Jia's group, right? Haha...they did indeed pass by here half a year ago. Why...are you acquainted with him?"

Excited, Duo Mei's eyes welled up with tears as she said, "Acquainted, yes, of course I am. We're his most loyal subordinates. How could we not recognize our own master?"

The relay station master sighed in admiration as he shook his

head. “Ever since we were locked in by the Thorn Mice, Suo Jia and your group are the only ones that have ever successfully reached this place. I hadn’t imagined that both master and subordinates would be able to easily bypass those Thorn Mice!”

The relay station master glanced at Duo Mei’s group and asked hesitantly, “That’s right, how did you guys break through the blockade of Thorn Mice?”

“Hm?” Duo Mei replied in confusion, “We just directly charged through! What...are those Thorn Mice supposed to be really powerful? How come we couldn’t tell?”

The relay station master gaped at Duo Mei in shock. After studying her for a long time, he said in realization, “So it was like that. I understand now, your armor must be a completely sealed, impenetrable piece of equipment. That’s the only way you would be able to completely ignore the attacks from those Thorn Mice!”

Duo Mei nodded and said tearfully, “That’s right, our armors were the results of the Young Master using up more than half of his finances for the sake of giving us custom, semi-Epic ranked equipment. It can overlook the Thorn Mice’s attacks entirely!”

The relay station master’s eyes lit up at Duo Mei’s explanation and he excitedly replied, “Then that’s great. Since you have such excellent equipment, would you be willing to take on a task from me?”

“Task? What task?!” Duo Mei asked inquisitively.

He hurriedly replied, “You all know as well as I do that those Thorn Mice outside have already completely blockaded off the entrance to the Greater Trade Routes. That’s why, we need your group’s help to clear out all those Thorn Mice to open up the entrance!”

“That’s...” Duo Mei furrowed her brows, and after a long hesitation, firmly replied, “I’m sorry, station master, but we came

to look for the Young Master, and we're already behind by over half a year. We know of Young Master's strength, and if we don't hurry up and chase after him, the distance between us will most likely increase more and more."

"Mmm..." The relay station master frowned. He also knew that clearing out all those Thorn Mice wasn't a task that could be completed within a day. With their reproduction rate, it would be impossible to eradicate them without spending at least a year.

After long contemplation, the relay station master suddenly lifted his head and offered, "How about this? Since you came to search for your young master, I'm sure you also know how complicated and vast the terrain in the Greater Trade Routes is. You must know that finding your young master won't be something you can do within a day or so!"

Duo Mei's brows were knit together in distress as she nodded. "We know that. But that's also precisely why we're in such a rush. We can't waste even a single minute!"

"Alright!" The station master loudly declared, "In that case, I still think you should accept my task. As long as you complete it, I can pass messages through all the relay stations to directly help you locate Suo Jia, and then use the sky ship to send you straight there. What do you think?"

"Mmm...." Duo Mei mulled over it for a long while before shaking her head as before. "I'll still refuse. We want to find Young Master because we want to help him, not because we just want to see him. And if we want to help him, we have to quickly increase our own strengths. If we stay behind to do tasks here, our strengths won't improve fast enough. This is something that Young Master would never allow."

"Haha..." The relay station master shook his head and continued, "You don't need to worry about that. I won't bother hiding it from you, but the Greater Trade Routes entrance being blockaded off

has a great impact on us. We've already received orders from the top that anything can be sacrificed as long as the path is opened!"

He paused for a moment. "How about this? While you complete this task, we can supply Toughening fruits to you. That way, your strength definitely won't end up at a standstill because of the task!"

Duo Mei's eyes couldn't help but glitter brightly. She knew very well of the magical fruits' uses, as well as their terrifying prices. If she could receive a year's worth of magical fruits...

While Duo Mei was hesitating, the relay station master seemed to be afraid of her backing out and continued, "The reason you want to locate your young master is because you want to help him. With an endless supply of magical fruits, your strength will greatly increase, faster than if you moved alone for sure. Those magical fruits aren't that easy to get, you know! If the Young Master hadn't happened to already prepare you with such battle armor, a task this important wouldn't have been bestowed onto you either."

While the relay station master was speaking, a large, white bird suddenly swooped down from the air, its strong talons tightly gripping the station master's shoulder.

The station master's brows furrowed together as he opened a small, iron tube that had been tied onto the bird's foot. After pulling out a white paper inside and looking it over...the station master suddenly tilted his head back and laughed heartily.

The relay station master passed the paper to Duo Mei. "You should see this yourselves. While we were talking, your young master has already passed the first checkpoint, and is now heading to the second. If you want to find him, you should really successfully complete the task first."

He proposed, "How about this then? As long as you complete this task, I will immediately use the relay station's information system to help you locate your young master. In addition...no matter how

many checkpoints your young master has passed by then, I can directly send you over to where he is, without you having to complete the checkpoint missions.”

Duo Mei thought for a long time before resolutely replying, “Alright. In that case, we’ll accept your task. However...you must promise to honor your words: those magical fruits must be given to us immediately!”

“No problem!” The station master agreed with a chuckle. “Toughening fruits are produced here, so it’s not an issue at all. But...what do you plan on choosing as your main ability fruit?”

Without any hesitation, Duo Mei answered, “The issue of what fruit to use is something we already decided on long ago. As dual elemental fire wind warriors, we choose the Explosion Fruit!”

“What? WHAT?!” The station master’s jaw dropped open in shock, shakingly stuttering, “How could you choose that kind of fruit?! Heavens...the budget will be completely overspent this time. The Explosion fruit is one that is only produced at the sixth checkpoint. It’s way too expensive, just the shipping costs will be...”

Without waiting for him to finish speaking, Duo Mei turned around and began to walk out of the village as she called out, “We know how expensive the Explosion fruits are. But that challenge is something that’s up to you to deal with. We’re only responsible for getting rid of those Thorn Mice!”

Duo Mei shouted out, “Come on, sisters, we’re heading out. In order to catch up to Young Master, we need to kill off all those useless mice as soon as possible!”

Chapter 358 – Weapon Soul Pt. 1

Suo Jia was serenely sitting at the bow of the ship, entranced by the sight of the endless sea before him. The Diamond Dragon in his arms was currently holding and licking an egg-sized monster core with its small red tongue from time to time, as if it was enjoying a sweet candy.

The sharp sound of footsteps came from behind Suo Jia, breaking the silence. Without even needing to turn around, Suo Jia knew who it was. “Why aren’t you resting? You know, once we reach the shore, we’ll be facing constant battles one after another.”

Nicole didn’t reply, and quietly sat next to Suo Jia. With a sigh, she said listlessly, “I can’t sleep. The ship keeps rocking, and it’s making me a bit dizzy.”

Suo Jia chuckled. “That’s fine too. Since you can’t fall asleep, let’s chat a bit!”

“Sure!” The corners of Nicole’s mouth tilted upwards in interest and she asked, “What should we chat about?”

Suo Jia pondered for a bit, before reaching his hand out. Instantly, the azure trident appeared in his hand. He smiled, “Help me take a look at this, what is it?”

Nicole curiously inspected the trident for a bit with an exceptionally focused expression on her face. After a long while... Nicole trembled as she exclaimed, “No...this can’t be. That’s just a myth, it can’t be real!”

Suo Jia smiled calmly and held the gem on the trident up to Nicole’s face. “You’ll know whether it’s a legend or not after looking at this.”

Nicole took a deep breath and held it as she closed one eye, peering into the blue stone with the other.

After a long while, she sighed and shook her head. “I hadn’t

imagined at all that this would all be real! To think that Divine Artifacts really exist in this world! Doesn't that mean that gods once existed as well?"

"Mhm..." With a serious nod, Suo Jia replied, "That's right, the gods indeed existed in the past. However...after their war, they all left or died, leaving only these Divine Artifacts behind. As long as we have this Divine Artifact and charge our way through the thirteen checkpoints, we can obtain the Godhead and become the gods of the new generation!"

Nicole gasped and exclaimed in astonishment, "This is really too unbelievable, I can't even begin to comprehend it!"

"Yes..." Suo Jia turned his head to look at the horizon above the sea and said sullenly, "However...although this weapon is identical to the Poseidon's Trident in the legends, it doesn't display any of its abilities in my possession; it's as ordinary as a rice straw!"

"What?" Nicole asked in confusion, "How is that possible?! While the rest could be fake, that gem can't possibly be. Even if it doesn't have many functions, it can't be as ordinary as a rice straw!"

Nicole suddenly jerked, seemingly having thought of something, and loudly stated, "That's right, have you made a blood contract? If you don't give your blood, the Divine Artifact can't link with you, and you naturally wouldn't be able to draw out the energy within the Divine Artifact!"

"Blood contract?" Suo Jia furrowed his brows in confusion.

Nicole gave an exasperated sigh and bitterly laughed, "Boss, you can't really not know of this!"

Suo Jia blankly shook his head and asked, "I really don't get it, I've never heard of such a thing before. Don't tell me it's..."

"Ok..." Nicole raised her hands and helplessly sighed, "I give up. I'll just tell you then. Bite your finger and drip your blood onto that blue gemstone. Then...it will use the essence in your blood to

call upon the great energy within the Divine Artifact!”

Suo Jia stared blankly for a bit before he immediately sprung into action, bringing his fingertip to his mouth and biting down hard. Captivatingly crimson blood soon began to flow out.

Under Nicole’s watch, Suo Jia placed his finger on top of the blue gem, and beads of blood rapidly dripped down its surface.

“Sizzles...” As the drops of blood descended, they suddenly began to boil. The red blood bubbles rose up and then burst. At the same time, the blood, as if being sucked in by something, rushed to worm into the gem.

Suo Jia stared at the moving blood and turned to ask Nicole, “How is it? Exactly how much blood do I need? Isn’t this good enough?”

“No!” Nicole anxiously watched the gem as she shouted, “Don’t stop, you’d better not stop. The more blood you offer, the greater your control over the Divine Artifact will be, and the more energy you will be able to draw out. It can be said that the more blood you give, the more compatible you are with the weapon!”

Suo Jia grew dizzy and sweat began to form on his forehead as he stared at the blood continuously flowing into the gem. In pain, he said, “Nicole, I’ve already given a cup’s worth of blood, is it still not enough? If I continue like this, I won’t be able to last!”

“You must not stop!” Nicole grabbed onto Suo Jia and urged, “The more blood there is, the better. This blood will form a new you within the weapon, and link the inside and the outside together, allowing the two energies to activate the same magic. That’s why...the more blood you give up, the mightier its force is!”

Suo Jia finally understood. It wasn’t like there was a certain amount that should be offered, but rather, he had to try to get as much as possible in. The greater the amount, the more energy he’d be able to draw out from the Divine Artifact.

A Divine Artifact was defined as a weapon that had a spirit, or its Weapon Soul. This Weapon Soul was created from the user's blood that allowed the two beings to connect through their spirits, and defeat enemies together. This was what made Divine Artifacts so terrifying!

Seeing that Suo Jia had understood the concept, Nicole continued, "Young Master Suo Jia, the Weapon Soul is formed solely based on your blood. It's a liquid, it isn't alive. Once the Weapon Soul is shaped, you can summon it as a separate form. Although it won't be able to wear any equipment, it can draw out the Divine Artifact's energy, and attack together with you. The strength of the magic will thus increase exponentially!"

Suo Jia gritted his teeth and pulled out a Life Potion with his other hand, gulping it down. At this point, he couldn't be bothered to care about other things. The Divine Artifact's Weapon Soul was too important; it was directly responsible for determining the Divine Artifact's might and its limits! This was equivalent to the Divine Artifact's innate ability!

After drinking two refined Life Potions...Suo Jia patiently watched the blood continue to drip onto the gem, completely ignoring any pain. He simply prayed silently for more of the blood to make its way into the gem.

Time slowly passed. After some time, when Suo Jia had downed the hundredth refined Life Potion, the blue gem flashed, and stopped sucking in the blood.

Despite this, Suo Jia refused to give up, and continued trying to drip blood onto the stone. Only after confirming that it had indeed stopped absorbing the blood did he hurriedly activate a Moisture Technique and heal the wound on his finger.

"Phew..." Suo Jia let out a long breath. He estimated that he'd pretty much used up the equivalent of all the blood in his body. In other words, the blood currently flowing through his body had

been completely supplemented by the Life Potions.

The next instant, a sound rang out and a red light exploded within the gem. At the same time, Suo Jia felt his head blank out. By the time he'd regained his senses, he was astonished to discover that he was in a strange place!

Although Suo Jia was still on the ocean, the ship was gone, Nicole was gone, and...there was a huge glacier floating on top of the water! After looking around the somewhat familiar glacier, Suo Jia suddenly recalled something; wasn't this the sea realm within Poseidon's gem?

Suo Jia looked down at his own body, and was astonished to discover that he didn't actually have any body to speak of. Although he could see around him, the place he stood was just nothingness. It was as if he had concealed himself.

Suo Jia subconsciously raised his right hand. In that instant, the space in front of him suddenly rippled, and under the control of Suo Jia's spirit and consciousness, Suo Jia's right hand gradually appeared before his eyes, as if it had floated up from underneath the water.

Suo Jia was ecstatic by this discovery, and tried to move the other hand, followed by his legs, feet, torso, and head. Finally...Suo Jia's body completely materialized before him.

Suo Jia's heart raced as his body soared across the sky into the distance. In the blink of an eye, his body appeared above that glacier. All he could see beneath the horizon was the endless ocean!

Chapter 359 – Weapon Soul Pt. 2

Just as he was about to examine the glacier underneath him more closely, Suo Jia felt his mind blank once more. This time, upon awakening, he found himself back on the ship, with Nicole next to his side.

Suo Jia stood there blankly for a long while, still not understanding what exactly had happened. He shot a suspicious look at the gem on the trident, and he sensed a faint ripple spread out from it.

Suo Jia closed his eyes and activated Psychic Technique, connecting with that ripple. The next instant, Suo Jia was once again above that glacier, sitting cross-legged across the other Suo Jia. Those faint ripples were being emitted from his body.

Nicole curiously asked, “How is it? The Weapon Soul formed, right?! How large is it?”

“Eh...” Suo Jia only now remembered that there was still someone next to him. He rubbed his head and replied, “The Weapon Soul did form, it’s the same size as me!”

“Wow!” With a shocked gasp, Nicole excitedly said, “That’s great. Nobody else can take this Divine Artifact from you now. Even if you get killed, nothing will change, you can still exist in the form of the Weapon Soul and use the Divine Artifact’s ability to reform your body. This is the ability of a god!”

“Is it really so mystical?” Suo Jia couldn’t help but doubt Nicole’s words.

Having not noticed Suo Jia’s doubtful expression, Nicole urged, “Quick! Hurry up and try to activate two magics, and see how powerful this Divine Artifact is!”

Suo Jia nodded and stretched his right hand out, tightly gripping the Sea God’s Trident. Mysterious Ice Arrow was instantly

activated, and Suo Jia's jaw promptly dropped in shock.

The instant he'd activated the magic, although it had been only a brief moment, Suo Jia could clearly sense that while his magic was rushing through the Mysterious Ice Arrow, the Weapon Soul inside the Divine Artifact had emitted the same magic power. Together with Suo Jia's, they'd condensed to form a glittering Mysterious Ice Arrow that promptly shot outwards.

"What..." Stunned, Suo Jia blankly stared at the ice arrow that had faded in a flash. "What's going on? That guy actually helped supply energy for that magic with me. The scarier part is that he provided the exact same amount of energy that I did!"

"Haha..." Nicole nodded. "Of course. The amount of magic power being transferred actually depends on your state of realm, which in turn depends on your essence, spirit, and your comprehension of the magic elements. The two of you share the same soul, so your understanding of the magic elements will naturally be identical as well. Based on this, your Weapon Soul can boost your magic attacks by a lot!"

"Isn't..." Suo Jia hesitantly asked Nicole, "Isn't that...a bit too average? I recall that the Legendary-ranked Vulcan's Roar, could already boost magic's might by 100%!"

"Haha..." Nicole nodded. "That's right, the Emperor also has a staff that can boost light magic by 200%. So what?"

Suo Jia raised his voice, "Does that still need asking? A Legendary-ranked equipment can already boost magic by 100%, and this weapon I have is a Divine Artifact. How can it only increase my magic's might by 100% as well?!"

Nicole gave a dry laugh and replied, "Boss, your math doesn't seem to very good. Who told you that the combination of both you and the Weapon Soul can only go up to an 100% increase?"

Seeing Suo Jia's blank expression, Nicole continued, "Every

magic activated is based on the doubled magic power used simultaneously by you and your Weapon Soul, how can they be the same?”

Suo Jia stared back at Nicole in confusion, “I don’t understand at all. If magic power is doubled, then doesn’t the magic’s might double as well? Is there any difference?”

“Yes!” Nicole nodded and firmly answered, “How can you be so confused? The magic’s might will be about the same, but what about the effectiveness of the magic? Don’t tell me you forgot about that?”

“What?!” Suo Jia’s jaw dropped down in shock as he stammered in disbelief, “You...you mean to say that the magic’s effectiveness will double too?!”

Nicole smiled, “That’s right, that’s exactly it. On top of the basic doubling of the magic’s might, the Weapon Soul’s most significant ability is that it will also double the magic’s effectiveness. This is also the greatest difference between a man and a god!”

Suo Jia slapped his thigh as he finally understood. “I get it, I truly understand now. For example, the highest temperature fire a person can create is one at 3000 degrees, but a god’s would be at 6000 degrees. Although it’s only twofold, the might of the fire would be way greater!”

Nicole sighed in admiration, “That’s exactly it. Only a god can create flames at the highest temperature, and freeze ice at the lowest temperature. This is something that Legendary-ranked, or even Epic-ranked equipment, can’t even compare to.”

Nicole’s eyes then flashed, and she furtively said, “Moreover, Young Master Suo Jia, this Divine Artifact doesn’t just boost magic’s might, but also increases all of your abilities exponentially, such as your water manipulation ability, which has already doubled. Now you should understand the power of the Divine Artifact, right?”

“What?! That’s impossible...” Suo Jia shook his head in disbelief and shock. Increasing water manipulation ability by 100% was already something that only Legendary or Epic-ranked equipment could do. But this was just one of the Divine Artifact’s very small, supplementary abilities.

Nicole continued, “In addition, your cultivation speed will be increased. Basically...it’s equivalent to you gaining the results of two people cultivating. The Weapon Soul only shares a soul with you, it has its own thoughts and awareness. You two are separate entities coexisting in one body. This is the incarnation ability from the myths!”

Suo Jia dumbfoundedly stared at Nicole. “Alright, I’ll remain calm as you continue to tell me, does this Divine Artifact have any other advantages?”

“Hm...” Nicole furrowed her brows in thought, “Of course it does. The ones I said just now were just appetizers. The real reason a Divine Artifact is deemed so is because it possesses the power of the gods. For example, creating barriers and realms! There are some other things as well, but it’s up to you to find out what they are because nobody has ever used a Divine Artifact before. Thus, their abilities are still unknown.”

“What?” Suo Jia asked in confusion, “Barriers? Realms? You can find those in any magic book!”

Nicole covered her eyes in exasperation, “You call those barriers and realms? In your eyes, do barriers and realms cover spaces that are a hundred meters in circumference? Are they that powerful?”

“Um...” Suo Jia cautiously asked, “No way, does a barrier that covers 100 meters not count as a barrier? Does a realm that covers 100 meters not count as a realm?”

Chapter 360 – Searching For Business Opportunities Pt. 1

Nicole studied Suo Jia for a long while before she finally replied, “Alright, since you want to know, I’ll just tell you. The world within that gemstone is actually the sea realm; in other words, that space is Poseidon’s realm!”

Suo Jia stared at Nicole blankly and asked, “How is that possible? That can’t be a barrier or realm, that’s an independent world!”

“Haha...” Nicole shook her head. “If it were just large, it wouldn’t be a big deal. The issue is that the realm’s energy is absolute, while the barrier’s might is unrivalled!”

She continued, “You know about the god of the sea, Poseidon, right? He was the deity in charge of the waters. As long as he was within the sea realm, even Zeus couldn’t rival him. Do you understand? Within the realm, something normal becomes an absolute. This is what an absolute realm means, something absolutely unequalled!”

Suo Jia said with a longing expression, “Is that really true? Heavens...when can I display the might of this realm and barrier?!”

“Tch...” Nicole tsked and shook her head, “I don’t know much. All I know is that the barrier is something only Mage Deities can control, and that realms are the gods’ representative ability. However, the furthest level in human records is Mage Saint!”

Suo Jia choked and stared at Nicole as he asked incredulously, “You mean, since the beginning of humanity until now, nobody has once activated a barrier or realm?”

Nicole nodded confidently. “That’s right, it’s exactly as you just said. No human can master these two great magics. Everything I’ve said is simply from the Divine Records. The highest magic an ice

mage can attain is absolute zero, which allows them to become a Mage Saint!”

“Sigh...” Suo Jia sat down on the ground in disappointment and said with a bitter smile, “After all this time, talking about all these amazing things like absolute energy and being unrivalled, everything is still the same as when I didn’t possess this Divine Artifact!”

Nicole rolled her eyes in annoyance and rebuked, “You...this isn’t a problem with the Divine Artifact, you know. This is because you don’t have the ability to activate its powerful energy. Did you think anyone could use it? Let me tell you, a Divine Artifact can only be used by a god. In your hands, that thing can’t even display 0.001% of its might.”

“Mhm...” Suo Jia nodded in understanding and replied with a bitter expression, “I already know all that. For example, that Vulcan’s Roar I sold before could only really provide a path to reaching Mage Saint rank. Once a person reaches Mage Saint rank, the Vulcan’s Roar won’t do much. It can only boost 50% for a Great Magister, and 10% for a Mage Saint. To a Mage Deity, the Vulcan’s Roar basically becomes garbage!”

“That’s right!” Nicole agreed, and triumphantly said, “That’s what it means. Basically, Legendary ranked equipment can only be used up until the Magister rank, while Epic ranked equipment can be used up until the Mage Saint rank. Once Mage Deity rank is reached, those equipment all become completely useless.”

Nicole then excitedly added, “The Divine Artifact is the exact opposite. The greater your strength is, the more might it can display. If your strength is too low, you won’t think the Divine Artifact is very powerful.”

“Yes...” Suo Jia looked at Poseidon’s Trident in his hand with regret. “In my hands, it cannot demonstrate its god-level power. The only thing I can activate is human power; the difference in

levels is still too great!”

Nicole praised, “That’s exactly right. That’s why, what you need to do now is improve your strength as much as possible. The stronger you are, the stronger the Divine Artifact becomes. Even if you really do become a god, this Divine Artifact can still continue helping you!”

Just then, a shadow of green amidst the water suddenly appeared in their vision. Suo Jia excitedly stood up and pointed at it. “Nicole, quick, look at that! Isn’t that an island?!”

Nicole turned to look at the horizon gradually nearing, and calmly replied, “Yes, this is the Greater Trade Routes’ second checkpoint, Barry Island. It’s vast, but sparsely populated, and it is covered with dense forests!”

“Tch...” Suo Jia tsked and chuckled, “It’s just an island, how large can it be?”

“Eh!” Nicole blankly stared at Suo Jia for a while before replying, “You’re right, it’s not that big, just around the size of 10 Holy Light Empires. It’s very, very small...”

“What? WHAT?!” Suo Jia immediately turned to look at Nicole, who was walking towards the hold of the ship, and he asked incredulously, “What did you just say? The size of 10 Holy Light Empires?! Where in the world is there such a large island?”

Nicole didn’t answer, and went into the hold of the ship to pack up her stuff. Suo Jia watched her from behind, mentally making some calculations. It took a week to cross Holy Light Empire, which meant that just crossing this island, without doing anything else, would take 2.5 months!

As the small ship continued to advance, the green shadow in front of them gradually enlarged. The green shoreline rapidly seemed to extend in both directions. If it were a normal island, one would still be able to see its boundaries while looking at it from the

ocean. But this island was really too large, to the point where one couldn't see either end of it. All one could see was the shoreline of indeterminate length.

Suo Jia quickly pulled out a notebook and looked Barry Island up. It produced Enchantment fruits, and more importantly, was the largest source of illusion gems. There were thousands of illusion gem mines spread all over this giant island!

Of course, Barry Island wasn't the only source of illusion gems. However...60% of all the illusion gems distributed in the Greater Trade Routes came from Barry Island, which emphasized its significance.

Suo Jia looked at a map, and made some more improvements to his plans, before...the small ship finally reached land. Suo Jia's party of four alighted the boat and followed the path along the shoreline to enter the second checkpoint!

The relay station was unfrequented. Upon having reached this place after being stifled at the first checkpoint for who knew who long, there was no way they could bear to wait any longer. After all, this place was the main production source of the illusion gems, and these illusion gems were able to boost the might of magic equipment!

However, Suo Jia wasn't that rushed. They first found an inn to rest for a night, and then Suo Jia gathered all the party members the next morning.

Suo Jia looked around at Xiang Yun, Roger, and Nicole, and said, "Our next step will be the same as before. I will continue to run my business while you guys go adventure around, steal some things, or do some hired mercenary jobs. No matter what, you must all be extremely careful. You will only have unlimited possibilities if you stay alive!"

Xiang Yun chuckled and replied, "Not a problem, Captain, don't worry. I've been fine all these years, I won't have any issues!"

Xiang Yun cupped his fists to gesture at the others and smiled, “In that case, I will take my leave first. I will see you again at Illusion City’s inn in half a year”

As Xiang Yun’s figure slowly faded off into the distances, Roger also stood up with a smile and impatiently said, “Then, Boss, I will take my leave too. Hehe...I hope that Boss’s business goes smoothly!” Roger waved at Nicole and Suo Jia, and swiftly bounded out of the door as well.

Suo Jia couldn’t help but feel a bit sad upon seeing the two leave. Honestly, he didn’t wish for everyone to leave, it was really too lonely. However, he also knew that this was the most suitable way. If everyone stayed together all the time, nobody’s strength would improve.

At that moment, Nicole stood up and reluctantly said, “Young Master, I don’t want to leave. Can I stay by your side? Don’t worry...I won’t bother you!”

Chapter 361 – Searching For Business Opportunities Pt. 2

Suo Jia stared at Nicole for a long while before replying, “Nicole, what exactly is the reason you came to the Greater Trade Routes with me? What is your goal?”

Nicole thought about this for a moment before firmly answering, “I have many reasons for coming here, such as completing my family’s Invisible equipment set, becoming a leading role on the Greater Trade Routes, and reviving my family’s prestige!”

Nicole raised her head to look into Suo Jia’s eyes and earnestly added, “However...these are all side goals. The main reason I came here was to repay Young Master Suo Jia. If it weren’t for you, my siblings wouldn’t have been saved, and I would have sold my life to be bound to that vile duke forever!”

Nicole let out a long breath. “My younger brother can revive my family. As for completing the Invisible equipment set, Young Master has already agreed to help me with this task, right? I believe in Young Master’s abilities!”

Suo Jia hesitantly said, “That’s...” He hadn’t imagined that Nicole would say this kind of thing. He’d thought that any person would have personal reasons for braving dangers and risking their life to come here, but he hadn’t considered the possibility that Nicole’s main reason for coming all this was way himself!

Touched, Suo Jia replied, “Listen to me, Nicole, I’m really very moved by your kind feelings. However, I’m not helping you because I want you to repay me like this. We’re companions, comrades-in-arms that are working and fighting hard for the same objective.”

Nicole had a blank expression on her face, clearly having not understood Suo Jia’s words. Upon seeing her confused look, Suo

Jia continued, “You could indeed help me if you followed me, but your strength would not rise as quickly. I’m sure you also know that since I’m a merchant, you, as a thief, would definitely be wasting time if you followed me. Like that, even if you become a figure that has successfully passed through the Greater Trade Routes, would it really matter?”

“Your point is...? Nicole vacantly stared back, completely confused.

Suo Jia patted Nicole’s shoulder and smiled. “My point is that the basis of our group is to wander around as much as we please. I don’t want you to exist for my sake, but rather to struggle through obstacles for your own sake. After you get stronger, you can use it to contribute to the entire group. This is my greatest wish.”

Suo Jia paused here for a moment before continuing, “Nicole, I hope that from now on, you will continue to strive for your best with your own self in mind. You should set yourself free, and do whatever you want or like!”

Nicole trembled and bit her lip, having finally understood what Suo Jia meant to say, and nodded. “Alright, Young Master, I’ll listen to you. However...you have to be careful by yourself! There is danger lurking in every step on the Greater Trade Routes. No matter what, you must stay alive and meet with us again!”

Suo Jia happily smiled. “I will. However...you can’t just direct that towards me. You also have to watch your own safety. Remember, when there’s life, there’s hope!”

Nicole nodded, and reluctantly shot one last glance towards Suo Jia, before turning around and whirling out the door like the wind. In a mere instant, Nicole’s figure had disappeared.

With a sigh, Suo Jia slowly sat back down and closed his eyes, limply leaning back into his chair. How could Suo Jia not hope for everyone to stay together from beginning to end? Putting aside other factors, he’d at least be able to transport three times more

goods. However, Suo Jia didn't want the others to all be restricted because of him. Each of them had their own method of training, and Suo Jia wouldn't allow himself to be so selfish.

After sitting for a long while, Suo Jia finally recovered his spirits and stood up, walking over to the relay station master's home. Before officially entering the second checkpoint, there were still many things Suo Jia wanted to inquire about.

The relay station master found it a bit strange to see Suo Jia arrive, but he still warmly welcomed Suo Jia. After chatting a bit, Suo Jia finally brought up the main topic, and calmly asked, "Station Master, I'm sure you know I'm a merchant, so I'd like to ask you something: Would it be possible for you to provide some information and intelligence to me?"

"That's..." The station master paused for a moment before smiling, "I've been at this relay station for over ten years now, yet this is the first time anyone has ever asked me for information. Let me ask you, why do you think I'd have any kind of information?"

"Hm..." Suo Jia replied, "The reason is simple. As a relay station on the Greater Trade Routes, the information here must be extremely plentiful. I'm sure that...the bird's nest outside the door is there to transmit messages between other relay stations, right?"

The station master laughed, "I hadn't thought your observation skills would be so good. Alright...what kind of questions do you have? Go ahead and ask!"

Suo Jia's eyes shone and he smiled, "I believe that the second checkpoint requires some local products from the first checkpoint. I want to know what the most profitable local products would be for me to sell!"

The station master chuckled, "No wonder you came into the Greater Trade Routes as a merchant group, you definitely have a business mind! At the very least, nobody else has ever considered such matters before."

He pondered the question for a bit before answering, “The product that you could make the most money out of is definitely the magic fruit. I’m sure you also know that the Toughening Fruit is something that every checkpoint has, but the Freezing Fruit and Control Fruit are only produced in Icebound Valley, and magic fruits cannot be preserved for long. Thus...as long as you could transport Freezing Fruit and Control Fruit to here, the second checkpoint, I’m sure you could gain huge profit!”

“Oh!” Suo Jia’s eyes lit up brightly. “Then, aside from magic fruits, is there anything else I could exchange that would give me some more money? Magic fruits are small in size, so if I transport those alone, I’d be wasting a huge amount of space. That would be poor business sense.”

The relay station master smiled in reply. “You’re right, using an empty interspatial ring to run around on business isn’t appropriate. If you want to ship goods around, I recommend you try transporting mining tools. As you already know, Barry Island is where illusion gems are from, and this means that it needs a large amount of tools to extract the ores. Pretty much every adventurer will buy a dozen or so tools to go pick at the illusion gems, so...the value these mining tools have is beyond astronomical!”

“What?!” Suo Jia couldn’t help but break out into cold sweat at this. Truthfully....Suo Jia had also thought of going to the mines to excavate a bit and try his luck at digging up some super illusion stones, but it looked like Suo Jia wasn’t the only one that wanted to do that.

The station master laughed, “There are over a thousand mines total on Barry Island. Each one has 100 miners there collecting the gems, and the excavation tools can only be used for a week. In other words, Barry Island requires a hundred thousand mining tools every week!”

“Heavens!” Suo Jia’s jaw dropped in astonishment; he couldn’t believe his ears upon hearing this number.

The station master glanced at Suo Jia's shocked expression and added, "Also, there are over 10,000 adventurers scattered throughout Barry Island. Typically speaking, each adventurer needs ten excavating tools, which means there's another hundred thousand mining tools needed. Recently, an extremely high quality pickaxe was sold for a high price of 10,000 Trade Route coins. Now think about it, how much profit could you gain from all this?"

Suo Jia dumbfoundedly stared at the station master, and swiftly did some mental calculations. Barry Island didn't produce metal, nor did they have any blacksmiths, so all pickaxes were outsourced. This meant that the amount one could earn from selling a pickaxe had reached a frightening cost of 10,000 coins! The important part was that outside the island, these pickaxes were actually very cheap and could be bought at a negligible price of only 10 coins!

Chapter 362 – Hagglng Pt.1

Seeing Suo Jia's excited expression, the station master couldn't help but give a dry smile, "Don't get excited too soon; although going back might not be a major issue, how are you going to return here? To my knowledge, there's a huge backlog of adventure groups waiting on that side, yet there's only one ship that comes here per day."

Suo Jia shook his head and confidently replied, "That's not a problem at all. Neither going back nor returning here are issues, I can just build my own ship to travel!"

"What! Build your own ship?!" The station master stared at Suo Jia in shock. "Stop joking. If ships could just be built like that, wouldn't everyone have done it ages ago? The stretch of water between the first and second checkpoints is called the Changing Sea. There's only one chance to cross through every week; if you try to go any other time, you'll end up lost at sea."

After a pause, he continued, "Even if you go on that specific day, you won't necessarily be able to get here. The Changing Sea can only be safely crossed by the local fishermen that have been trained at the relay stations. In addition, this training takes at least 10 years to complete. You shouldn't underestimate these matters."

Suo Jia's expression turned to one of disappointment as he did some quick mental calculations. After a while, he resolutely declared, "Alright, well, even if I can only carry out this business once, I must do it! I'll get on the next ship and rush back to the first checkpoint!"

"Alright..." The station master helplessly replied. "Since you're so adamant about it, I won't say anything else. You should prepare immediately; the ship is about to head back now. The next time it will leave will be exactly a week from today."

Suo Jia gratefully thanked him and stood up to head towards the

wharf to board the ship and return from whence he'd come.

Although the distance between the two checkpoints was only 100 kilometers or so, it still required an entire day of travel to go back and forth at the small boat's speed. The boat would set out in the morning, and not arrive until the afternoon, before once more setting off and arriving at the first checkpoint in the evening. Once it was nighttime, the Changing Sea's dense fog would rise, and the chance to cross the waters would have passed.

During the following half month, Suo Jia was constantly moving around day and night. After running around the ten major cities at the first checkpoint and successfully filling his ten interspatial rings with pickaxes, he rushed back to the wharf.

Suo Jia spent another five million coins to buy that week's ship pass, and rushed back to the second checkpoint. This time, he didn't make a stop at the relay station. Instead, he mounted his Diamond Dragon and directly advanced to the nearest major city.

Ever since obtaining the ten rank 10 Giant Icebear cores, the Diamond Dragon was pretty much able to maintain its combat state forever. As long as it held the core in its mouth, the Diamond Dragon didn't have to worry about lacking in energy; thus, Suo Jia's progress rate was raised several fold, and he didn't need to take breaks anymore.

The only unfortunate part was that the Diamond Dragon still couldn't fly. Its enormous heavy body made it impossible to stay in the air. All it could do was jump up with its strength and open its wings to glide over a distance. At the moment, it couldn't do this for a distance longer than 200 meters.

After passing the relay station, Suo Jia followed the main path to the closest location: Scarlet City. This wasn't the largest city at the second checkpoint, but it was the most famous for producing Illusion Gems. Many adventurers tried to test their luck there, so selling the pickaxes there was undoubtedly the best decision.

Before he'd progressed very far...countless magical beasts suddenly swarmed around him in dense packs, pouring towards him from both sides of the path. Upon closer inspection, he realized that they were all giant wild boars!

Although these beasts were similar to boars, they were actually much larger, closer to the size of oxen. In addition...they had fierce tusks coming out from the corners of their mouths that were at least a meter long. It seemed almost as if the boars were hanging off of these tusks instead of the other way around.

These wild boars had cyan colored Life Protections, meaning that they had stronger defenses than the Crimson Bears from the first checkpoint. Although they didn't possess the fierce bear paws that the Crimson Bears had, Suo Jia knew that those tusks were definitely even stronger than the Crimson Bears' attacks.

Any experienced hunter knew that the ranking of magical beast types in terms of might from strongest to weakest went boar, then bear, and then finally tiger. The wild boar was ranked first because of its extremely powerful charge. Even tigers or bears would avoid encountering boars.

As Suo Jia thought about this, more and more large boars came bounding out of the forest from both sides, swiftly gathering around him, amounting to the appearance of over 200 boars in mere seconds.

Suo Jia stared in shock at the massive amount of boars crowded around him, and hurriedly stood up on the Diamond Dragon's head. With a flick of his right hand, he materialized the Sea God's Trident. Suo Jia knew that relying on the Diamond Dragon alone wouldn't be enough; if he wanted to eradicate so many boars, he'd have to rely on himself.

Finally, the boars stopped pouring out from the forest. Suo Jia couldn't help but feel astonished at the sea of boars before him; there were nearly 300 now! Magical beast encounters of this scale

were never seen at the first checkpoint.

The boars all began to run over in short strides. The further the distance between them was, the faster their charging speed was. In just a short while, they'd already reached a frightening speed.

Suo Jia firmly gave the Diamond Dragon a command. When the boars were around 20 meters away from the Diamond Dragon, it used its powerful legs to jump up high in the air.

In Suo Jia's mind, as long as they jumped up above the ground, the wild boars would charge into each other and ultimately lose their speed. Then, upon landing, Suo Jia could blast out the Hailstorm Technique around the Diamond Dragon. Once these wild boars lost their speed, their attacks were pretty much negligible.

Just as the Diamond Dragon's body quickly rose up, the crowd of wild boars below had already covered the distance between them, and was now 10 meters away from where the Diamond Dragon had been.

Suo Jia watched, expecting them to charge into each other, but just then....a shocking scene unfolded before him. The wild boars that had crossed the ten meter distance below them suddenly lifted their front hooves and jumped up like arrows, swiftly charging towards the Diamond Dragon.

Although the Diamond Dragon had jumped at a very high speed, its body was too large and heavy after all. In comparison, the wild boars were way faster. Suo Jia watched as the wild boars seemed to transform into piercing arrows that rapidly caught up with the Diamond Dragon in midair, their bodies violently crashing into the Diamond Dragon's sturdy body.

"Bang! Bang! Bang..." Following a series of muffled bangs, the boars all leapt up and rammed their sharp tusks into the Diamond Dragon's body. In that moment, the Diamond Dragon lost its center of gravity due to the large number of impacts. Without the

ability to fly away or land down on the ground again, its body shuddered under the fierce collisions.

Suo Jia inwardly cursed. Once the Diamond Dragon was defeated, he'd lost its protection, and he'd have to face the impacts from the boars himself. There was no way he'd be able to hold up against more than a few such powerful attacks.

Suo Jia clenched his teeth and suddenly raised the trident up high, instantly activating Hailstone Technique. Only such a move would be enough to change the current situation.

With a surge of blue light...a large mass of blue gathered in the air above Suo Jia, and a ton of ice arrows whizzed downwards from the sky.

Suo Jia's mind went blank as he stared at the concentrated rain of arrows. This obviously wasn't the first time he'd used Hailstorm Technique before, but it was completely different this time.

Firstly, in terms of range, the Hailstorm Technique coverage had increased from a 40 meter diameter area to an 80 meter diameter one. In addition, the number arrows that poured down in the same amount of time had doubled. The effect of the freezing air that these Ice Arrows contained, as well as their flying speed, had all doubled as well!

Suo Jia was completely unable to comprehend what was going on as he stared in shock with Spirit's Eye at the wild boars being shot down one after another. Their Life Protections continued to shatter while the storm of arrows showed no sign of halting.

Finally, the Hailstorm Technique finished. However, Suo Jia had discovered that, most importantly, apart from the fact that the Hailstorm Technique's attack range, arrow count, speed, and freezing air effect had increased, the duration of the magic itself had doubled.

Chapter 363 – Haggling Pt.2

Originally, Suo Jia had thought that because of the magic's original attack range, power, and other factors he'd need to use at least a dozen Hailstorm Techniques to eradicate the mass of boars. But it seemed that with this strengthened hailstorm a single attack was enough to completely kill off all 300 boars!

He gaped in shock at the Sea God's Trident in his hand. Did it really only double the magic's might? No...this wasn't even a proportional effect anymore, it was exponential! However, Suo Jia couldn't tell exactly how much it was being boosted.

Suo Jia commanded the Diamond Dragon to land back on the ground. As he looked around at the boar corpses all frozen in ice he couldn't help but let out a sigh of admiration. This was the power of a Divine Artifact?

By now, the Diamond Dragon had already recovered its energy and finished repairing itself from the previous impacts. Thus, under Suo Jia's prompt, the Diamond Dragon restarted its advance towards their destination.

After two days of travel, Suo Jia had crossed over 2000 kilometers and obliterated six more crowds of magical beasts to finally arrive at the city built next to the mines: Scarlet City!

Now that he'd completed this journey Suo Jia was finally able to comprehend the main difference between the first and second checkpoints: the number of magical beasts. At the first checkpoint, Suo Jia would at most only encounter 30 at a time. But at the second checkpoint, the number had increased by tenfold to 300 at a time. Smaller magical beast communities couldn't possibly survive in this place.

Of course, because their numbers were larger, the amount of territory they covered was larger as well, meaning that the frequency of encounters was less. However, each encounter would

always have at least 300 magical beasts involved!

If any other person encountered such a massive number of magical beasts they wouldn't have any choice but to flee. But Suo Jia was different; with powerful strength and the might of the Divine Artifact, Suo Jia plowed forwards. Thus, his current travel speed was even faster than it had been at the first checkpoint.

Upon arriving at Scarlet City, Suo Jia first replenished his food supply at an inn before heading to the market with the aim of selling out the pickaxes in his possession as quickly as possible.

However, Suo Jia didn't plan to open his own shop to sell the pickaxes this time. He preferred to use that time to do other useful things. Suo Jia's purpose for this business wasn't to earn profits but to increase his strength!

After wandering around the market for a long time he found that there were many pickaxe shops. Most of them sold pickaxes that had been repaired after being broken, but even those were sold for prices of up to 10,500.

Although these pickaxes could still be used, their dimensions were no longer proportional and harder to transfer strength through. This lowered their ore-extracting efficiency extremely and most of the pickaxes' tips had shortened in length by at least 10 centimeters after being repaired so many times.

Suo Jia decided on a plan, and after circling the market a few more times, entered the largest shop. As soon as he walked in the salesperson warmly welcomed him and courteously said, "Mister, have you come to buy a pickaxe and try your luck?"

Suo Jia glanced around and noticed that the intact pickaxes being displayed were actually an astonishing price of 20,000 each! He couldn't help but inwardly gasp in shock.

After his survey of the shop, Suo Jia responded to the salesperson, "I'm not here to buy pickaxes, but rather, to talk

business with your boss. Go and tell your boss that I've come with a huge business proposal!"

The salesperson hurriedly nodded and sped towards the backdoor. If this person was here to discuss a huge business proposal, he couldn't be offended.

Soon afterwards, a short and stout middle-aged man was led over by the salesperson. After seeing Suo Jia, the boss asked in confusion, "I'm the boss of this shop, may I ask why you're looking for me..."

Suo Jia smiled and shook the boss's hand. "It's like this: I have 10,000 excellent quality pickaxes I want to sell out. Are you interested?"

"What?!" The boss's jaw dropped in shock as he asked incredulously, "What did you say? 10,000?! How is that possible?"

Suo Jia chuckled and waved his hand to pull out one of the pickaxes and passed it to the boss. "You can take a look yourself, it's this type of pickaxe. I hope that you will be able to propose a suitable price. If it's too low, I'm sure that other shops will definitely welcome me as well."

The boss hurriedly accepted the pickaxe and carefully scrutinized it, occasionally knocking on it to test its hardness.

After a long while, he praised, "This really is an excellent good. Although it isn't a peak grade pickaxe it can already count as a premium item. But...do you really have 10,000 of these?"

Suo Jia firmly nodded and calmly replied, "As long as you offer a suitable price, I will provide the goods. If the price is good enough I can even supply more!"

"What?! More is possible?!" The boss stared at Suo Jia in disbelief.

Suo Jia confidently answered, "That's right, that's what I said. However...typically, I don't like selling out so many goods in a

single city. After all...the demand in one city is limited!”

The boss knit his brows together in deep thought. After some time, he abruptly raised his head to look at Suo Jia, “Can you tell me how many of these pickaxes you can provide at most?”

Suo Jia hesitated for a bit before finally answering, “If I’m satisfied with the price, I can immediately supply 10,000. But you must keep in mind that I only have the heads of the pickaxes. You have to fit the handles yourselves!”

The boss shook his head excitedly. “Fitting the handles isn’t a problem at all, those are everywhere. The problem right now is whether you can really supply 10,000 of these pickaxes immediately...”

Suo Jia furrowed his brows. “Boss, that isn’t the immediate problem. Right now, the main question is how high Scarlet City’s demand for the pickaxes is. I don’t want to oversaturate my goods here. I’m sure you understand as well that if that happens, the prices will be inflated and fall, and our profits cannot be ensured!”

The boss could tell from Suo Jia’s reply that he indeed had the amount of goods he claimed and urged, “I agree that your words are reasonable, but...you’re underestimating Scarlet City’s demand. Anyone here would want at least a dozen pickaxes like this. With such excellent quality pickaxes, the speed of ore extraction would increase, as would the production of ores. The investment and manufacturing are definitely proportional!”

He paused to think for a moment before continuing, “How about this, I’ll purchase all your pickaxes for a price of 13,000 each. I can guarantee that even if you ship them to other cities this will be the highest price you can sell them for unless you plan on opening your own store to sell them. Otherwise, this is the limit!”

Suo Jia did some calculations. After buying the pickaxes from Suo Jia, this guy would definitely sell them for 15,000 each and gain a profit of 2,000 per pickaxes. Although selling a single

pickaxe wouldn't amount to much profit the sum of 10,000 together meant a profit of two hundred million!

Suo Jia scrutinized the boss's expression for a long time before firmly stating, "How about this then? I'll sell all my pickaxes to you for 14,000 each. If you agree, then let's start immediately. If not, I'll go to another store. I'm confident that there will definitely be many people willing to complete this transaction with me!"

Chapter 364 – Bustling Back And Forth Pt.1

The store boss's expression turned bitter. "Mister, if I took them for 14,000 each, I'd only be able to earn 1000 per item. That's just too low. I'm sure you understand that as a merchant, one has to gain at least a 20% profit. Taking them for 13,000 each is already making an exception!"

Suo Jia nodded, "That's right, I agree with your words. However, you must remember that this is a huge amount of goods. Moreover, you can sell all of these within a year to gain that hundred million in profit. Most importantly, with these pickaxes, you can safely secure first place in this business of gathering tools. This is a benefit that can't even be weighed in terms of money, am I right?"

Suo Jia glanced indifferently at the boss and continued, "You shouldn't just focus on the lower individual profit, you should calculate the overall profit. Earning a hundred million a year is something I'm sure has never happened since this store was first established, right?"

"That's..." The store boss couldn't help but sweat at this. Indeed....getting an annual income of even ten million was very hard. But despite at all this...nobody would normally purchase pickaxes for such a high price!

Amidst the store boss's hesitation, Suo Jia helplessly shook his head, "Since you're so troubled, then forget about this transaction, I'll just go and purchase a shop of my own. Wouldn't it be better for me to just earn a hundred million myself?"

"Don't!" The store boss cried out in panic. He knew that if Suo Jia really went to open his own store, the title of being number one in the business of gathering tools wouldn't be his anymore. In addition...if Suo Jia sold the pickaxes for the price of 15,000 each, no other shop could possibly compete!

The store boss gritted his teeth and loudly declared, “Alright, 14,000 it is, I want all of them! Let’s start the transaction immediately!”

Suo Jia smiled brightly at these words. Although selling these goods to the store boss meant that Suo Jia would earn a hundred million less, he would be able to gain the money immediately and wouldn’t need to spend the effort to promote his sales. In addition, this saved him an entire year’s worth of time!

With the store boss’s pushing, Suo Jia quickly completed the transaction, and he soon pocketed the fourteen hundred million Trade Route coins. In addition to the money he’d already possessed, Suo Jia’s assets now reached sixteen hundred million. When he saw this astronomical figure on his card, he couldn’t help but sigh. How could he spend this much money!

Suo Jia turned around and asked the store boss, “Um...I’d like to ask you a question: if I want to purchase some Illusion Gems, where should I go buy them?”

The store boss cried out incredulously, “You don’t even know that? All Illusion Gems are put up for auctions. You can check the transaction information whenever you want, and bid for the Illusion Gems to your liking!”

Upon hearing this, Suo Jia immediately rushed out of the shop and headed towards the auction house. However, exactly what style was this auction for Illusion Gems in?

Ten minutes later, Suo Jia finally reached his destination. As soon as he entered the auction house, he was surprised to discover that it was completely different from the ones he’d seen in the past.

The space within the large auction house wasn’t filled with seats, but rather rows and rows of exhibit displays that were each two meters tall and ten meters long, and separated into ten shelves. Every shelf was split into ten compartments each containing an

Illusion Gem.

A single row of displays contained 1000 Illusion Gems! In addition, there were at least ten such rows in the auction house!

At the moment, there were a few dozen buyers strolling up and down the rows of displays, scrutinizing and choosing the Illusion Gems they took a liking to.

Suo Jia let out a breath and began walking to the rows of displays to inspect them more closely. Each display was covered with profound and mysterious magic symbols. Although it seemed like the Illusion Gems were just being covered by a crystal exterior, it was actually impossible to steal these gems. Before one could even open the crystal covering, the Illusion Gems inside would move away, and the auction house personnel would immediately surround the culprit for attack!

After closer examination, Suo Jia had a general understanding of how the auction house worked. Under each Illusion Gem was a price tag. On the top of the tag, there was a space for one to fill in a starting price, underneath, a buyout price, and underneath that, currently what the highest price the Illusion Gem was worth. If one wanted to purchase this illusion gem, they would have to remember its location, then go to the front desk and fill out a form with their bid. If nobody else bid higher after a certain amount of time, the Illusion Gem was theirs.

Of course, there was a more efficient method: to directly purchase it at its buyout price. Although this price was definitely higher, it didn't require waiting time. One could simply slide their merchant card into the machine and directly pick up the good!

After looking at all the Illusion Gems, Suo Jia soon discovered that there were a total of ten grades of Illusion Gems. They could be used to boost the might of magic equipment, as well as the equipment's rank. In addition, the equipment rank could only be upgraded if the gem's rank was equivalent.

In other words, once an equipment was raised to the second rank, a rank 1 gem wouldn't be of any use anymore. One would have to switch to using a rank 2 gem instead. Likewise, once the equipment changed to third rank, a rank 3 gem had to be used.

Moreover...the gems had a success rate. All of them had a success rate of 50%, but the first 6 ranks couldn't lower an equipment's rank upon failure to upgrade, but once it hit the seventh rank and higher, a failure to upgrade resulted in the equipment rank falling back down to zero!

Suo Jia did some mental calculations. At the moment, he had the Atlantis equipment set, the Sea God's Trident, and many ornaments and rings. There seemed to be a lot that he could improve with gems. However, not all equipment could be upgraded.

There was a size requirement for the implementation of Illusion Gems. For example, in the Atlantis equipment set, gems could not be used on the gloves and the arm guards due to their small size. He'd have to combine them into a single hand guard for it to work.

Thus, the entire Atlantis equipment set should actually be split as hand guard (gloves + arm guards), upper body armor (chest plate + belt), lower body armor (leg guards + trousers), combat boots, helmet, and mantle. As for the jewelry like Faerie's Soul and the interspatial rings, they couldn't be modified with gems. The gem itself was already several fold larger than these equipment, so there was no way they could be used.

Suo Jia finally decided that he possessed a total of seven magic equipment that could be improved with gems. That meant he would need seven gems each from ranks one to six! If he implemented anymore, there would be a danger of failure.

SUo Jia began to carefully study the prices. A rank one Illusion Gem cost 1 million, a rank two 2 million, a rank three 3 million, a rank four 8 million, a rank five 20 million, and a rank six 50

million! That was a total of 600 million!

By now, Suo Jia's jaw had dropped down in shock. He just couldn't believe this number he'd calculated himself. Originally, he'd prepared to even use a rank ten gem, but it seemed now that this would be impossible! Any rank seven and above gems were in the hundred millions. Suo Jia only had 16 hundred million, so how could he get these gems? In addition, the Illusion Gems only had a 50% chance of successfully boosting equipment, and past rank seven, failure would result in all the previous efforts a waste.

After contemplating for a long time, Suo Jia decided to first upgrade all equipment to rank six, and then upgrade his Atlantis Crown to rank ten. The reason why he didn't do it to Sea God's Trident first was because the crown increased Suo Jia's cultivation speed, so the earlier he did it, the more benefits he'd gain. As for the Sea God's Trident, whether he modified it sooner or later didn't really make much of a difference.

Upon Suo Jia's summons, the auction house staff appeared in a flurry and Suo Jia swiftly strode through row after row of display cases to swipe his card. In just a few minutes, Suo Jia had bought a huge amount of rank 1 gems. Then, Suo Jia rented a workplace to start preparing the process of integrating the gems into his equipment..

The Illusion Gems were actually a type of crystallized energy. After millions and millions of years, this energy which had been stored deep beneath the earth under high pressure had condensed into crystals, and as the earth's crust moved, they were shifted upwards towards the surface to form the Illusion Gems.

The principle behind using the Illusion Gems was to transform them back into energy by combining it with equipment and forming a completely developed energy circulation system within it. This would strengthen the equipment's ability to gather both its own energy and energy from its surroundings, increasing its magic.

It would be as if the equipment was surrounded by a spiral of energy that had a powerful attractive force, allowing it to absorb more energy from the environment before combining it all in the equipment to boost the might of its released magic.

The success rate of using the Illusion Gems depended on how stable this final, condensed form was. If there was any flaw that broke the robust energy circulation system, the entire gem would instantly crumble, causing the contained energy to disperse and disappear.

Chapter 365 – Bustling Back And Forth Pt.2

Suo Jia took out a rank one Illusion Gem and put it in an extraction box, and then put the Atlantis' Wisdom into an enhancement room. This extraction box utilized the properties of magic to remove a specific magic element. Once the gem lost its stability, it would collapse and then the equipment placed in the enhancement room would automatically start absorbing the energy.

“Ding!” Suo Jia took a deep breath and abruptly opened the extraction box, and the Illusion Gem within immediately disintegrated. It looked as if the Illusion Gem in the transparent extraction box had completely disappeared and had been replaced with a rainbow colored light.

The next moment all the colorful light entered the enhancement room through a crystal tube. Among the seven colors of the light, the blue beam of energy quickly gathered around Atlantis' Wisdom.

Suo Jia couldn't help but hold his breath as he watched the blue light wrap around Atlantis' Wisdom. Although the entire process only took about a second, Suo Jia felt like time had come to a standstill.

Finally...a soft hissing sound could be heard as the brilliant colored light escaped from an outlet on the side wall of the enhancement room. At the same time, the blue light surrounding the Atlantis' Wisdom gradually began to separate from it and disappear without a trace.

“Sigh...” Suo Jia bitterly shook his head. He could tell that this first attempt had failed. However, there was nothing that he could do about it, it was just a matter of luck. Although the 50% chance success rate didn't seem that low, it was impossible to ascertain the results unless one manually performed the extraction.

Although the first gem's extraction had failed, meaning that Suo Jia had lost a hundred million coins, he knew that the process wasn't one for poorer people to do in the first place. If they weren't willing to pay up, it was better not to attempt to in the first place.

Suo Jia placed another Illusion Gem inside the extraction box. Once more, the gem transformed into a multi-colored array of light and flowed out into the enhancement room.

This time, Suo Jia's luck wasn't bad. After a second or so, the blue light covering Atlantis' Wisdom didn't just disperse. Instead, it faintly floated and drifted around the surface of the crown like a glimmer in the air.

Suo Jia excitedly clenched his hands and reached out to remove Atlantis' Wisdom and insert the upper body armor in its place. Unfortunately, this time the extraction failed three times in a row, and only upon using the last of his rank one gems did he finally succeed.

Suo Jia speechlessly stared at the two equipment that he'd finally enhanced with an agonized expression. How was this a 50% success rate? It seemed more like it was below 30%!

Suo Jia could only return to the auction house and purchase another ten Illusion Gems before returning to his room to attempt to enhance his equipment again. As it turned out, Suo Jia ended up using a total of 24 Illusion Gems to successfully enhance seven pieces of equipment to rank one. This success rate was clearly below 30%.

Suspicious, Suo Jia went up to the front desk to complain to the staff member. "Miss, is there something wrong with the Illusion Gems this auction house sells? How come my success rate isn't even 30%?"

The staff member patiently replied, "Mister, there's definitely nothing wrong with our Illusion Gems. Honestly, there's no way any Illusion Gem could have defects. Although you might not be

content with a 30% success rate, that honestly isn't low!"

Suo Jia doubtfully asked, "So you're saying it's high? Are you saying that there are people that get even worse results?"

The staff member nodded. "That's right, the worst record we have is someone having extracted over 800 gems in a row without a single successful upgrade to rank one."

She then paused and carefully explained, "The 50% success rate actually refers to each individual gem. In other words, if your luck is bad, every one of your gems could fall on the chance of failure, so no matter how many you use, it won't improve your result."

Upon hearing this response, Suo Jia finally understood. Originally, Suo Jia had thought that the 50% meant 50/100 gems would succeed. However, it actually meant 50% chance of success for each individual gem. If one had bad luck, it was possible that they could use up 10,000 gems and still not succeed even once.

For lack of better option, Suo Jia could only go back to the displays and buy 20 rank two gems. The reason he could purchase so many was because the auction house reimbursed buyers if they returned any extra, unused items.

Like this, Suo Jia continued to enhance his equipment. After spending every last bit of his newly earned money, he was disappointed to discover that his equipment had only been enhanced to rank four, and the amount of money he'd need to spend on rank four gems was 1.6 billion! He'd only just earned a massive sum of money today, but had barely held onto it before using it all up. This amount spent was frightening.

Although Suo Jia had used up most of his money within the span of a single afternoon, he still felt pretty accomplished when he looked down at his armor and weapons that was now enshrouded in a hazy blue light. From what the staff member at the front desk had said, equipment enhanced to rank four or higher was definitely a powerful figure. After all, what kind of average person

could possibly possess this amount of financial resources?

After putting on all of the armor, the blue glows from each had merged together like water and now covered his entire body in a layer of blue film made of light.

Although he had spent most of his money, Suo Jia didn't have any regrets. His success rate had finally reached around 30% [overall], and while the staff member had informed him that this wasn't a particularly high value, it was still above average.

By the time Suo Jia had left the auction house in contentment, it had already gotten completely dark outside. Anyone that passed by Suo Jia couldn't help but be taken aback. After all, seeing someone that had boosted all of their equipment to this high of a rank was an extremely rare sight, one that many never saw even once in their entire lives.

When Suo Jia noticed the astonished expressions around him, he felt proud of himself for a brief moment. However, he immediately returned to his senses; although this equipment looked really cool, it was too eye-catching. Those with many assets would always encounter trouble. How was there any benefit of gaining people's attentions? Although Suo Jia was confident in his own strength, he wasn't to the point where he could be arrogant and egotistical.

Suo Jia hurriedly turned around and started running towards a tailor shop. Upon charging in, he immediately purchased an extremely large, black cloak to tightly wrap around his armor, making sure that not a single sliver of light was showing.

Suo Jia closely inspected himself in the mirror. The large, black cloak gave Suo Jia a mysterious air. Because of its size, the bottom half reached the ground and the large hood hid Suo Jia's face deep within. At first glance he gave off a strangely sinister feeling.

"Phew..." Suo Jia let out a breath and relaxed. Fortunately... although the cloak looked pretty strange, it successfully hid [his armor. Without it, he'd probably end up in an extremely difficult

situation.

After purchasing the cloak, Suo Jia left the city. He had absolutely no money on him now, and at the moment the most profitable business he could do was shipping pickaxes back.

Half a month later, Suo Jia was sitting on the deck of the ship back to the first checkpoint, his eyebrows knit together as he inspected a long scroll in his hands. This scroll contained a detailed account of the enhancement process he'd gone through. He hoped that he would be able to find some general patterns this way.

Chapter 366 – Controlling Luck Pt.1

Failure, success, failure, failure, failure, success, failure, failure, failure, success, failure, failure, failure, success...

Suo Jia's frown deepened as he examined his records. No matter how he calculated, he couldn't find any patterns in his results.

Suo Jia stared at the densely packed statistics that didn't seem to have any correlation. Although he couldn't find a pattern, Suo Jia did make a bewildering discovery: the enhancement success rate was around 30%. Sometimes it was a bit more, and sometimes a bit less, but 30% was the average.

Suo Jia knew that at the moment he still had too little resources, and that he'd have to continue enhancing to slowly find a pattern. He believed that everything in the world followed a type of order, it was just a question of whether it could be discovered or not.

Once he returned to the first checkpoint, Suo Jia returned to the ten major cities to purchase 100,000 pickaxes once more. He also placed a future order. Although Suo Jia had spent most of his money, he still had a few hundred thousand. However, this amount was equivalent to nothing in Suo Jia's eyes.

Suo Jia returned to the second checkpoint with all the pickaxes and rushed over to Obsidian City. Suo Jia knew that if he shipped these goods to Scarlet City, there was no way he would be able to sell them at a suitable price. After all, Suo Jia had already sold 10,000 of them there. The city now had enough supply for at least a year.

However, because the magical beasts blocked the roads, the fact that Scarlet City had a full supply didn't mean other cities would. If Suo Jia made a round trip once a month, he would be able to complete six transactions within half a year and earn over 8 billion. However...even if all this money was spent, to what extent

would he be able to enhance his equipment?

His journey advanced swiftly. Finally, Suo Jia arrived at Obsidian City and he headed directly to the largest tool exchange shop. The reason he didn't look at any smaller ones was because of their deficit in finances. Not all stores could hand over a few hundred million to purchase these pickaxes at once.

By now, Suo Jia had insight in the negotiations process. Going by his experience at Scarlet City, he sold all his pickaxes for a price of 1.4 billion. This was to be expected...a profit of a hundred million per year was impossible to turn down.

Without wasting any time, Suo Jia ran straight to the local auction house and continued to enhance his equipment. This time, his results were even more mediocre; after spending 1.6 billion, he was only able to raise all his equipment to rank 6. A general success rate of 30% still held.

During the following four months, Suo Jia continued to purchase pickaxes once a month without rest. After having successfully upgraded all his equipment to rank six, he had even managed to accumulate 4 billion.

Since it was now the arranged meetup time, Suo Jia didn't continue enhancing and instead rushed back to the inn at Illusion City at full speed. That was where they'd all agreed to meet.

Suo Jia rushed so quickly back to the inn that he actually arrived a day early. There was still a whole afternoon and night left until the arranged meeting time. While pondering what to do, Suo Jia suddenly had a new train of thought [regarding the enhancement process].

Although he hadn't found any patterns, Suo Jia had considered it closely for the past half a year, and had gotten some results. Based on his inspection, there were still some tentative patterns!

Although historically the worst record was enhancing 800 gems

in a row without success, Suo Jia was sure that this person was just extremely unfortunate. If everyone suffered experiences like that, then there'd be no point in trying to look for a pattern. However, Suo Jia believed that someone's fortune was set from the day of their birth.

Although Illusion City wasn't the city that produced the most Illusion Gems, it was where the most people performed enhancements. That was because there was a sculpture of the goddess of fortune erected in the center of its main square!

After eating lunch, Suo Jia went back to the Illusion City auction house and sat down in a chair in front of its entrance. He set up a sign that he'd prepared beforehand and then closed his eyes to rest a bit.

The words Suo Jia had written on the sign were very simple; he would enhance gems for people that wanted to raise their equipment to rank one. If they handed over the fee of 2 million coins, Suo Jia would be responsible for successfully enhancing their equipment!

Anyone could see that for Suo Jia, who had a success rate of 30%, accepting only 2 million coins was a huge financial loss. However, Suo Jia's current objective was to collect data and examine its behavioral trends, so he didn't really mind losing money. Rather, the most important point was to verify the pattern he'd found in the past half a year!

Before long, a lanky mage walked over. After glancing over at Suo Jia, he exclaimed in surprise, "Will you really enhance equipment to rank one for only 2 million?"

Suo Jia looked over at the mage and nodded. "Yes, that's right. If you don't believe me, I can get a collateral you are satisfied with acknowledged by the auction house, and get it back after I succeed."

The lanky mage hesitated for a bit before asking in confusion, "I

really don't understand. Can it be that your success rate is 50%? Even so, you wouldn't be losing or gaining money by accepting only 2 million!"

"Haha..." Suo Jia chuckled and calmly replied, "I have my own reasons, but please forgive me for being unable to say them."

The mage thought this over for a bit before resolutely nodding. "Alright, in that case, please help me. I have a total of 6 equipment I want to enhance."

Suo Jia replied in a low voice, "Alright, that's not a problem, but my current mental condition isn't the best and I'm currently recuperating. Can you come tomorrow morning at 8?"

"No problem!" The mage affirmed, and bid farewell. As Suo Jia watched the mage's figure disappear off into the distance, he couldn't help but feel a bit at loss. Was doing all this really the right choice? He wasn't sure.

Just then, another low voice rang out, "Mister, is what you have written on the sign true? Will you really be willing to help us enhance our equipment to rank one for only 2 million?"

Suo Jia smiled and confidently answered, "That's right, you read it correctly. You can give me the money after I successfully enhance the equipment and I have a collateral here that the auction house can acknowledge, so there definitely won't be a problem."

As he spoke, more and more people had discovered his offer, and fought to get to Suo Jia first. After seeing the sign, it inevitably became a main topic of discussion.

In the span on the entire afternoon and the first half of evening, Suo Jia accepted over a hundred appointments to enhance more than 500 pieces of equipment. However, Suo Jia asked all of them to come after 8 the next morning. After all...Suo Jia didn't have that many goods to use as collateral at once, so he could only keep

exchanging with customers one by one.

In the latter half of the evening, Suo Jia stopped accepting requests and began to meditate. Although enhancing didn't really consume spirit energy or magic energy, Suo Jia still preferred to maintain his optimum state.

The next morning, all of the people came flooding over. When Suo Jia looked at the packed crowds jammed within the auction house, he couldn't contain his astonishment. This wasn't just 100 people, it was more like 500!

Suo Jia shook these thoughts away and used his card to purchase over a thousand rank one gems in one go. He then found a work room and began to start enhancing.

Every time he enhanced an equipment, Suo Jia would carefully record it down. As time passed, the pieces of equipment were boosted one after another to rank one. At the same time, the crowds of people watching were growing more restless. Who wouldn't get excited over something cheap and great like this?

Every warrior wanted to enhance their equipment. For each gem used, the equipment's might could potentially be raised by 10%. That meant reaching rank ten would increase effects by 100%.

Although the 10% might not seem that great of a number, if an entire set of 10 pieces of equipment was raised to rank one, there would be an overall increase by 100%. If the entire set was raised to rank ten, then it would be an astounding boost of 1000%. Of course, there were no more than ten people in the entire world that had an entire rank ten equipment set.

Suo Jia continued to place gems in the extraction box before moving it into the enhancement room with practiced movements. At the moment, Suo Jia was in a hyperactive state. This was already his fourth failure in a row. For the sake of waiting for this kind of chance, Suo Jia had already extracted hundreds of gems, using up millions of coins.

Suo Jia anxiously watched the magic equipment inside the enhancement room. The rainbow colored light finally came pouring out from the side outlet, and the next moment...the glow surrounding the equipment gradually disappeared without a trace.

Chapter 367 – Controlling Luck Pt.2

But Suo Jia was not disappointed at all. Rather, he began to tremble from excitement. Based on the pattern he'd previously observed, Suo Jia would never fail six times in succession. His lucky number was six, as he had never failed on the sixth time since he first started recording his progress. For the sake of this number, he'd already enhanced hundreds of equipment.

Of course, that didn't mean failing five times in a row happened often. In actuality, out of all the equipment Suo Jia had enhanced, he'd only failed five times in a row twice. Although only twice, he had records of failing after one, two, three, and four attempts. However, he had yet to experience a failure after the fifth time.

Suo Jia took off the Atlantis' Wisdom on his head. Based on Suo Jia's experiments, the sixth attempt would definitely succeed, so he wouldn't waste this chance on someone else. This rare opportunity that only appeared once every hundred times had to be used for himself. This was Suo Jia's true objective.

The only reason Suo Jia was acting so generously while suffering a million in losses per enhancement of others' equipment was firstly to gather data and secondly to confirm whether or not this pattern was really true!

Suo Jia anxiously placed a rank seven gem worth a hundred million into the extraction box, and placed the rank six Atlantis' Wisdom into the enhancement room. He then shut his eyes, and abruptly pulled down the lever to start the process.

"Ding!" Suo Jia's heart couldn't help but race when he heard the sound indicating the beginning of the extraction. If it succeeded, Suo Jia would obviously be wild with joy. If it failed, he'd experience a shocking loss that, when factoring in the fact that the rank seven gem cost a hundred million by itself, would end up surpassing seven hundred million!

As he heard the sound of air leaving the outlet, Suo Jia's heart sped even faster. He knew that the result was now set, and he didn't really have the courage to open his eyes and look at what it was!

This wasn't a simple matter just because it was only one equipment. It determined whether or not the enhancement pattern he'd found was right or not. If it was true, Suo Jia would be able to minimize his losses and enhance all his equipment to peak grade. If it was wrong, Suo Jia would obviously be disappointed.

He finally gathered the courage to open his eyes and look over at the Atlantis' Wisdom inside. The crown now looked as if it had been made from some kind of blue mineral, radiating a brilliant glow in all directions.

"Wow!" Suo Jia excitedly exclaimed at the sight. It had succeeded! It had really succeeded! The rule that stated a success must occur by the sixth attempt had once again been confirmed. This was really too amazing!

After learning of this encouraging news, Suo Jia was so ecstatic that his movements quickened as he continued to conduct enhancements. Although Suo Jia was losing a million for each equipment he boosted, there was no way Suo Jia minded this kind of monetary loss at this point!

After enhancing another hundred or so, Suo Jia's breath became rushed again. Heavens...another one had just failed five times in a row. As Suo Jia looked at the many failed magic equipment lying within the enhancement room, he began to hesitate [regarding his next course of action].

Suo Jia was now confident in his 'six' theory, but...should he enhance all his equipment to rank seven first, or continue enhancing Atlantis' Wisdom to rank ten first?

After mulling this problem over for a long time, Suo Jia gritted

his teeth and placed Atlantis' Wisdom in the enhancement room again. He then went outside his workroom to spend five hundred million on a rank eight gem.

He excitedly placed the gem into the extraction box, and his breath quickened once more. After hesitating again for a long time, Suo Jia finally hardened his resolve and pulled the lever down.

His reasoning was simple: of all the equipment in this set, Atlantis' Wisdom was the most important. It allowed Suo Jia to remain in the meditative state all the time. Because of this, Suo Jia's meditation time far surpassed any other person's, and the effects were obvious.

If he enhanced it to rank ten now, it would build on the current ability of maintaining the meditative state 24/7 by boosting its effects by 100%. That meant Suo Jia's cultivation speed would be four times faster than anyone else's which was extremely important to Suo Jia, who greatly valued strength.

"Hiss..." From the sound, Suo Jia could tell that the equipment was done. For some unknown reason, he had a feeling of dread. He could clearly sense that the enhancement had failed!

His eyes flew open and he looked over at the enhancement room and the Atlantis' Wisdom within. The light inside was so bright that he didn't quite dare to look at it directly!

Although still the same shape, the current Atlantis' Wisdom was now emitting a blinding blue glow. As if it had turned into a bright lightbulb, it had turned iridescent, sparkling, and translucent. Even though it didn't reflect any light rays, it naturally emitted a beautiful glow!

Suo Jia stared at it in disbelief. Although he had already believed in his 'six' theory, he still found it hard to believe his eyes when he saw the successfully enhanced product.

This was crazy. Completely crazy. Suo Jia's mind no longer

consisted of anything except ‘enhance more gems until the next “six” chance’!

Another hour passed, and Suo Jia did indeed see another case where five attempts in succession failed. With extreme anticipation, Suo Jia left the workroom and walked over to the innermost display case.

There were beautifully sparkling Illusion Gems placed in these luxurious displays, all of them rank nine gems. A single one was worth a billion! After debating for a long while, Suo Jia couldn’t resist the temptation and pulled out his card to purchase a rank nine Illusion Gem.

By the time he’d returned to his workroom, he’d strangely calmed down. This time, Suo Jia was extremely confident that he’d succeed. However, seeing as his feeling had been wrong the previous time, he wasn’t sure whether these premonitions were accurate or not.

With a deep breath, Suo Jia placed the gem in the extraction box and then placed the Atlantis’ Wisdom in the enhancement room once more, and pulled the lever. Soon after...he heard the sound of the extraction taking place and saw the gorgeous rainbow light shoot out towards the Atlantis’ Wisdom.

Suo Jia was calm, extremely calm, as he watched the light slowly surround the crown. But when it suddenly exploded with a brilliance as great as the sunlight, he couldn’t help but unconsciously shut his eyes. It wasn’t that he did it purposely, but that the brightness was just too intense, comparable to the sun itself!

This time, Suo Jia strangely wasn’t excited. Just like it was a normal occurrence, he indifferently took the Atlantis’ Wisdom out and continued to enhance other equipment until another chance of five failures in a row occurred. He nonchalantly spent 2 billion to purchase a rank ten gem and then after placing both items in their

appropriate places, pulled the lever once more.

Suo Jia, who was now calmly watching the gem go through the extraction process, knew that the success or failure this time would be in one fell swoop. If this failed, his previous slaving away would all be in vain. By now, Suo Jia had already spent 4 billion, and he only had some millions left. Failing meant that Suo Jia would suffer from an unimaginable loss!

The rainbow colored light finally poured out of the outlet and the Atlantis' Wisdom flashed a bright, piercing blue glow. Just as Suo Jia thought it was another success, the light suddenly retracted, and the Atlantis' Wisdom sitting there returned to its former state, drab and dark.

“It failed...” Suo Jia closed his eyes in agony, his mind blank...

Chapter 368 – Preparing To Head Out Pt.1

“Wait!” Suo Jia suddenly opened his eyes and looked over at the drab crown. There seemed to be something wrong!

Upon closer inspection, he realized that while the Atlantis’ Wisdom no longer radiated bright rays, there was still a faint rainbow halo around it that could be seen if he looked extremely closely at a distance of about ten centimeters away!

Suo Jia impatiently opened the enhancement room door and whisked out the Atlantis’ Wisdom. Indeed...floating in the air behind the crown was a ring of light about a meter in diameter and as broad as a rainbow!

When he placed the crown on his head...an indescribably refreshing feeling swept through his mind wave after wave. Suo Jia could feel himself enter a state he had never experienced before; he was extremely clear-headed, his mind was completely full, and it felt like it had become sharper as well.

Suo Jia swiftly turned around to look at a mirror in the workroom...and his jaw dropped dumbly in shock for a moment before he started laughing in glee to himself.

Behind Suo Jia’s head was a mysterious rainbow-colored halo. Its color was extremely faint, but was still distinct. Suo Jia had seen such a sight before, but that was only for the gods that appeared in old history books. In the legends, this phenomenon was called Divine Light. However, this Divine Light was much brighter and more colorful than Suo Jia’s halo, on an entirely different level that couldn’t even be compared. Only the shape and the color range were similar.

The crown had been restored to its natural state. Suo Jia was beyond shocked at this realization. When an equipment reached rank ten, it was equivalent to a Mage Saint’s rank. At this stage, the exterior appearance wasn’t as dazzling anymore, but its power

was much, much greater.

Suo Jia proudly wore the Atlantis' Wisdom. Now that he'd already used up all his money, he naturally stopped working. Even if he wanted to continue, he had no way of purchasing any more Illusion Gems.

Based on the rule of six, enhancing one equipment to rank ten needed at least 5 billion. Suo Jia still had six more equipment to enhance, which meant that he still needed 30 billion to enhance his entire equipment set to rank ten. In addition, this was all assuming that the rule of six stood true.

He covered his head with the hood of the cloak to hide the crown on his head. Fortunately...the halo was only on the back of his head, so the cloak completely blocked it from sight. If it was still rank eight or rank nine, anyone would be able to see the powerful glow it emitted unless he covered his entire face.

When he left his workroom, the area outside was packed with people. Everyone was waiting for Suo Jia to enhance their equipment. Typically speaking, a 20% success rate was already pretty decent, plus Suo Jia was accepting fees as if he had a 50% success rate. This kind of amazing opportunity was one that even idiots wouldn't pass on.

Although Suo Jia saw everyone's longing gazes, he couldn't help but announce, "Everyone, I no longer have any more money, I used it all just now. If you all give me addresses, I will definitely come back and help you enhance your equipment once I've gathered enough money again!"

Although everyone was disappointed, they still left behind a method of contact. After all...this chance was better than none at all. As long as there was hope, they would continue striving for prospects.

After handling everything, Suo Jia finally left the auction house and stretched his stiff body. As he looked up at the sky under the

warm sunlight, he felt an unprecedented feeling of contentment.

Suo Jia was just about to let out a relaxed sigh before he suddenly froze, his body in mid-stretch. He abruptly glanced back at the sun once more...and then let out a shocked exclaim and started running wildly. Judging from the sun's position, it was already past noon. To be more precise, it was already past 3pm, meaning that it was already 3 hours past the designated meeting time with his companions!

Within 20 or so minutes, Suo Jia raced back to the inn and anxiously looked all around, but he couldn't find any sign of his companions!

Just then, he felt a pressure on his shoulder as a soft and smooth hand clapped on. Before Suo Jia had even turned around, Nicole said, "You rascal, why are you so late? You scared us to death, we thought something might've happened to you!"

Suo Jia turned around in surprise to look at Nicole and apologetically replied, "Don't ask. I was so busy just now that I completely forgot the time. Also...where are Xiang Yun and Roger?"

Nicole rolled her eyes in exasperation and muttered, "Where else? They're obviously at the Adventurer Union, trying to issue a request to search for you. Let's hurry up and go after them..."

Suo Jia scratched his head in embarrassment, and the two headed towards the Adventurer Union, finding Xiang Yun and Roger without incident. After canceling the request, the four of them walked back towards the inn.

The next few hours were spent sharing what they'd all been doing the past half a year, and it was soon dinnertime. After finishing his food, Suo Jia lazily sat in a chair and began the first formal conference after meeting.

Suo Jia looked around and asked, "How are everyone's

preparations? I've already obtained ten trust certificates, so if there are no problems, we can cross the checkpoint tomorrow!"

Roger's eyebrows knit together and he hesitantly asked, "Boss, have you ever thought about what would happen if we encountered that adventurer?"

"Hm?" Suo Jia was confused at first, but soon realized that Roger was referring to that merciless homicidal maniac!

When they had first entered the Greater Trade Routes, over a hundred groups had been stuck at the first relay station because of the Thorn Mice. The reason they had wanted to leave the Greater Trade Routes was because they said that past the second checkpoint, there was a merciless murderer!

Although Suo Jia was confident in his and his companions' abilities, he knew that his current state was only better than that of people first entering the Greater Trade Routes. If he really encountered someone that was able to single-handedly wipe out hundreds of groups, he'd definitely experience a tragic death!

However, the only thing Suo Jia had heard from the people were that an attack from all sides by thousands of people couldn't phase the opposite party, and that the people were instead killed and scared out of their wits, to the point of losing their courage to continue onwards in the Greater Trade Routes.

Suo Jia suddenly realized that he'd been overconfident in his abilities this whole time, to the point where he'd never considered losing to this guy. He hadn't really tried to collect more information on him, and had completely forgotten about this crazy killer!

Xiang Yun opened his mouth, "Captain, I've recently heard a lot of adventurers discussing this homicidal maniac. Because of him, only 14 groups have successfully reached the third checkpoint in the past two years, and the other thousands of groups have been stuck at the second checkpoint. I definitely think we cannot

underestimate this monster since we clearly can't do what he can!"

"Mmm..." Nicole nodded and seriously added, "Young Master, I think they're right. I've also heard some top secret information; it's said that this mysterious killer doesn't even need to move to cause his enemies to die tragically. His enemies basically can't even get near him! No matter how many people are present, they are nothing to him!"

Suo Jia dumbly stared at his companions in shock. This whole time, he'd been focusing entirely on improving his strength and had completely forgotten about gathering and organizing intelligence. Although they were about to head out, he had absolutely no information on the opposite party. This time, he had really failed as a boss!

Suo Jia knew that there was no longer any way he could retreat. If he admitted his mistake now, he'd lose everyone's faith. Thus, no matter whether they survived or not, no matter what happened, he had to charge forwards to the third checkpoint!

Suo Jia firmly replied, "No matter how powerful this guy is, we must continue forwards. Our objective won't change. It's not like we can just keep retreating whenever our opponents are extremely strong, right?"

Xiang Yun wholeheartedly agreed. "That's right, it doesn't matter how powerful he is, we still have to challenge him. Even if we die, we can't just keep shrinking back from everything!"

"Agreed!" Suo Jia resolutely nodded. "Although the enemy is very strong, maybe even more than we think, I refuse to shy away without even trying. No matter what, we have to at least make an attempt first!"

"Alright..." Roger reluctantly nodded and cautiously answered, "I admit what you guys have said makes sense. In that case, we should rest up early and make sure we're in top condition to scout around tomorrow!"

Xiang Yun and Roger walked out of the room, leaving only Nicole and Suo Jia together.

There was a long silence before Nicole let out a sigh. “Young Master, you must be completely prepared before we head out this time. That guy really is another level of powerful. Any carelessness will lead to our group’s destruction!”

Nicole took out a blue scroll from her interspatial ring. “Young Master, this is a scroll I found from some historical remains. Judging from its color, it should be related to the ice element.”

“Oh?” Suo Jia raised his head to look at the scroll in Nicole’s hands and accepted it. At the same time, Nicole turned around and walked out the door.

Suo Jia inspected the scroll a bit more closely before returning to his own room. After flipping it around his hands a bit more, he finally pulled off the string tying the scroll together and the blue scroll slowly unrolled open.

Chapter 369 – Preparing To Head Out Pt.2

Ice Shield! When Suo Jia saw the magic written in the scroll, he couldn't contain his excitement. The Ice Shield technique actually summoned two sturdy shields of ice that could be used to block an enemy attack. It was also the strongest defensive ice magic.

Suo Jia flicked his right hand and the sapphire blue Sea God's Trident appeared in a flash. Then, according to the notes in the scroll, Suo Jia activated the Ice Shield technique!

With a small sound, blue shields made of Mysterious Ice slowly materialized in front of Suo Jia and began to gradually surround his body in a circle.

"This is..." Suo Jia looked around in astonishment at the ice shields around him and was delighted to discover that there actually weren't just two shields, but four! Four 2 meter tall, long and narrow shields of ice covered with mysterious designs were constantly revolving around him.

Suo Jia quickly realized that if it were any other person, only two shields would be summoned. It was because of the Sea God's Trident in his hand that he had been able to activate four. Most importantly, the Sea God's Trident doubled the effects of any ice magic, making the ice shields sturdier, to the point where it wasn't any weaker than a shield made of steel!

These four shields of ice revolved around him like a carousel with no gaps. In addition, Suo Jia was able to use his manipulation ability to change the ice shields' positions as he pleased. He could block any attacks in close-range or long-range!

With these four ice shields, Suo Jia became much more confident in their upcoming adventure. He dispersed the magic and closed his eyes to meditate, making sure that he'd be in top condition for tomorrow.

The next morning, Suo Jia, Xiang Yun, Nicole, and Roger left Illusion City together and rushed towards the second checkpoint. Although they all felt somewhat uneasy, none of them were willing to voice their concerns.

Their journey went swiftly, and a week later, they finally reached the end of the second checkpoint and began going through the single path that connected it to the third checkpoint. This path wound through Green Forest Canyon, meaning that they had to cross through this ravine of dense forests to reach a shore on the opposite side of the valley. There, they could take a boat and leave Barry Island.

Suo Jia stood on top of a mountain and swept his gaze over Green Forest Canyon that stretched for dozens of kilometers. An extremely powerful magical beast lived on the top of the ravine, and it was impossible to walk around it. In addition, the lush forests at the bottom of the canyon were that homicidal maniac's hunting grounds!

They spent the night resting where they were, and Suo Jia led them into the Green Forest Canyon the next morning. No matter what happened, Suo Jia wouldn't retreat. Right now, his only choice was to charge through with all his strength!

It was quiet in the Green Forest Canyon. While they walked through the dense fauna, Suo Jia couldn't shake off the feeling that something was off. However, despite checking over his surroundings many times, he couldn't find anything wrong.

Nicole suddenly spoke up, "Why is this place so quiet? And we've been walking for so long already, yet no magical beasts have blocked our way?"

After hearing Nicole's words, Suo Jia immediately understood. She was right...it was much too quiet here. Not even the sounds of birds could be heard. In addition, they'd been walking for over half an hour yet they hadn't spotted a single magical beast. This was

indeed very abnormal.

“Ahh! Argh!” Suddenly two ear-piercing screams rang out from in front of them. The voices were horrifyingly chilling, and Suo Jia’s group immediately froze in their tracks to look up and try to see into the dense forest before them.

After a while, Suo Jia gritted his teeth and once again started to lead the group forwards. As they walked, Suo Jia inwardly scolded himself. This was the first time in his entire life that he’d ever been scared by an enemy like this. He was really becoming more amateur as he aged.

“Aiya! Ahh...” They had barely progressed before they heard another miserable cry in front of them. However, this time neither Suo Jia nor any of the others in his group stopped, and instead they continued advancing.

As they continued going forwards, the tragic screams never stopped. At regular intervals, one after another could be heard. Hearing these sounds was enough to instill fear in their hearts. After all, nobody here on the Greater Trade Routes was a coward, so for them to be scared enough to let out such screams was hard to believe!

Finally...dead bodies began to appear before them one by one. No...these actually couldn’t even be called dead bodies. It was more accurate to call them dismembered bodies!

They were all shocked by the corpses before them that had been split into multiple parts. The dark bloodstains on the tree trunks and the ravaged limbs scattered across the grass were enough to send chills through their bodies!

“Holy...” Suo Jia could feel his courage gradually dwindling. He knew that if they didn’t act soon, they’d end up frozen from fear by the time they saw the enemy. With a low curse, Suo Jia tore his gaze away from the bodies and ran full speed towards the direction the sounds had come from.

Seeing Suo Jia act so boldly, Roger hesitated for a moment and extreme concern could be seen on Nicole's face. As for Xiang Yun, he now had an expression of extreme admiration and respect. However...although the three of them were all showing different reactions, neither of them were willing to stop moving and they all sped up their pace to chase after Suo Jia, running towards the source of the sounds.

Suo Jia ran so quickly that it seemed as if the tree trunks around him were moving backwards. Finally...blurry figures appeared before him. At the same time, another desolate cry rang out from not too far away.

Suo Jia poured all his speed together, his body covering the distance of hundreds of meters in a flash. Upon reaching his destination, he looked around and saw over 400 adventurers frantically searching their surroundings with their weapons raised.

Suo Jia couldn't help but be confused by their expressions and stances. Exactly what were they doing? What were they searching for?

Suo Jia asked the warrior closest to him, "Oi! Where's that crazy killer? What are all of you looking for?"

The warrior shook as he answered, "Stop talking; hurry up and pull your weapon out. Stay on your guard. That guy is somewhere around here, maybe even next to you. He might act any moment now!"

"Huh?" Suo Jia shot a puzzled glance at the warrior, then at the dense crowd of people around him and asked in disbelief, "That's impossible! In this situation, he can't make a single move. As soon as he reveals his whereabouts, he can only face death in this situation where we're able to attack from all sides, no matter how powerful he is!"

Chapter 370 – Extremely Terrifying Pt.1

Although he didn't believe the homicidal maniac would really act under such conditions, Suo Jia still turned around cautiously and ordered everyone to raise their guard. At the same time, he pulled out the Sea God's Trident and activated his four ice shields. "What is that crazy killer like? What's he wearing?"

"Ssss..." Before the warrior could even reply, the soft sound of a breeze blowing could be heard and a green figure instantly leapt out from atop a giant tree. He instantly covered the 20 meter distance and, with a flash of his hand, a sword pierced towards a nearby warrior.

From close-range, Suo Jia could clearly tell that the enemy was using a rapier. It was only about as thick as a chopstick. It was a single-edged blade, and the body was hollow like a pipe. The end was tapered and sharp, and there was no doubt that this blade could easily pierce through even the strongest of leather.

Suo Jia's heart subconsciously began to tremble. He could easily imagine this hollow, thin blade penetrating through a magical beast's body, stabbing the heart and causing its blood to instantly drain out through the hollow body. This weapon was too cruel!

Suo Jia watched as the warrior faced with the green figure's attack let out a wild shout, the large sword in his hand slashing outwards. Golden sword qi slashed towards the killer.

Suo Jia couldn't help but inwardly cheer for the warrior. His move was perfect in both angle and timing. Suo Jia believed that the maniac killer would definitely have to withdraw with this counter! After all, such a slim rapier couldn't possibly withstand a parry from a large sword!

While Suo Jia was thinking this, the green figure instead made an unnatural movement, his body quickly shifting in midair to pierce towards the warrior from another angle as he seemingly slid

through the air.

Everything happened in an instant. Before the warrior could shift his stance, the killer had bounded in from the right, the rapier in his hand stabbing through the warrior's left side. The next moment, a crimson bud appeared at the end of the blade!

Suo Jia couldn't help but feel absolutely horrified at the sight of the bewitching flower of blood. He knew that the attack just now had gone through the warrior's heart where the blood had been drawn out from.

Although the warrior didn't die on the spot, his heart was now pierced through. Under such pressure, the warrior's blood would quickly drain out.

Nobody could possibly heal him in this situation; it could be said that the warrior would undoubtedly die. The homicidal maniac's ruthlessness lay therein; he didn't directly kill his victims, but rather inflicted fatal damage, then let the victim helplessly watch their blood gush out and feel their life gradually fade away. This was an unimaginable kind of fear.

Suo Jia couldn't contain the surge of anger that arose from witnessing this scene. He clutched the Sea God's Trident in his hand, prepared to charge forwards. This kind of cruel demon definitely couldn't be allowed to exist in this world!

Before taking more than two steps, Suo Jia was relieved to discover that he wasn't the only one with a sense of justice. Far and wide, the people surrounding the homicidal maniac frenziedly charged in. Ten warriors had even already reached a distance of ten meters away from the killer!

"We've caught him!" Judging from the killer's location and the ten warriors' relative speeds and positions, Suo Jia believed that the killer didn't have anywhere left to run. Anyone would be captured alive in this situation!

“Arghhhh!” While Suo Jia was thinking this, a string of miserable cries rang out from the group of warriors. The ten bodies were split into 50 pieces, and scarlet blood splashed out all over.

“Impossible!” Suo Jia abruptly stopped in his tracks and blankly stood in a daze after witnessing this sight. He just couldn’t believe it, how had the maniac killer managed to do all that?

Rewinding a second back, the ten warriors were charging full speed ahead so quickly that they left afterimages. But the next second, just a mere instant later, the ten warriors’ bodies had simultaneously been split into five pieces: head, arms, and legs!

Demon! Definitely a demon! Only a demon would be able to use such a horrifying move. How could a human possibly dissect ten warriors simultaneously in a mere instant? Even if it were Suo Jia, it would take him a much longer time to destroy those ten warriors!

Suo Jia watched the green-clothed killer bark out a cold laugh as he stretched his right hand forward. The next instant, his body magically rose up and instantly disappeared within the dense leaves without leaving a single trace!

Suo Jia felt his heart freeze. He finally realised why those warriors had urged him to raise his guard. This crazy killer could appear before someone and launch a terrifying attack at any moment. It was really too frightening!

Suo Jia turned around, prepared to warn Xiang Yun and the others to be careful but...suddenly the green figure came into view. With his right hand raised high, he silently jumped down from the leaves above; his target below was the still confused Roger!

“Roger! Watch out!” This was all Suo Jia had the time to shout before the homicidal maniac arrived right above Roger, the sharp and slim rapier in his hand piercing towards Roger’s back.

Before Roger could even react, a muffled sound was heard. Roger's eyes opened wide as, from behind, crimson buds leapt out from the end of the crazy killer's rapier!

"No!" Suo Jia roared in desperation. He frantically sped towards Roger. Even if he had to sacrifice his own life, he would definitely save Roger!

At the sound of Suo Jia's cry, the green clothed killer turned to look at Suo Jia. As his face was covered, Suo Jia couldn't see his expression. However, Suo Jia could see the killer's eyes!

What were those eyes like? They were pitch-black, yet extremely bright. They were large and sparking...at the moment, those eyes were looking at Suo Jia with a sense of pity.

"Wait! Pity?" Suo Jia was shocked by this thought. Just then, he suddenly heard a string of fierce sounds coming from the ice shields around his body. The next instant, the four ice shields around his body simultaneously split into three pieces each. The slices were neat and clean, cuts that even the sharpest of blades probably couldn't achieve!

"Ahhhh!" Suo Jia abruptly froze in his tracks as he heard a chain of screams from around him. When he looked around, he saw that half a dozen or so warriors that had been surrounding the crazy killer had instantly split into pieces. Their blood splashed through the air, dying Suo Jia's body scarlet!

Seeing the blood drip down from his eyebrows, Suo Jia couldn't help but tremble. If it weren't for the ice shields and the fact that he'd been on guard after seeing the killer's pitying gaze, he definitely would've been sliced to pieces, too!

There was clearly nothing in his field of vision. However, Suo Jia knew that there must be something there, something like very thin and sturdy threads. The victims just now had been shredded because they'd flown into these thin threads at high speeds!

Suo Jia looked at the green clad killer 20 meters away and then back at Roger, who was currently writhing in pain on the ground. He knew that if he just advanced like this, he'd undoubtedly just be asking for death. However...as a mage, he didn't need to move closer at all!

Raising the Sea God's Trident in his hand, a blue light flashed as a Mysterious Ice Arrow was instantly activated. At the same time, Suo Jia stretched his left hand out and a long ice stream slithered through the grass like a snake, bounding towards the maniac killer!

The homicidal maniac looked at Suo Jia in shock, before waving his right hand and instantly shattering the Ice Arrow. His right hand then turned at an angle and his body shot up like an arrow, instantly disappearing into the trees again.

With the ice stream opening a path in front, Suo Jia swiftly ran to Roger's side and fed him four refined potions in a row to start healing his wounds from the inside while Suo Jia activated dozens of Moisture Techniques in succession to save Roger's endangered life.

Suo Jia supported Roger and shouted, "Xiang Yun, Nicole, immediately follow me and retreat. This guy isn't someone we can go up against right now. We'll temporarily withdraw and reconsider our strategy!"

Chapter 371 – Extremely Terrifying Pt.2

Xiang Yun glanced over in the direction the killer had disappeared in with narrowed eyes before resolutely walking to Suo Jia's side. "Captain, let me support him. We'll be able to move faster this way!"

Suo Jia didn't bother arguing and handed Roger over to Xiang Yun. "Nicole, you and Xiang Yun leave first. Make sure to stay on guard and remain in the stealth state to protect Xiang Yun and Roger. As soon as that crazy killer appears, immediately use Instant Kill!"

Nicole anxiously asked, "Then what about you? What are you going to do? Are you not going to come with us?"

Suo Jia looked far into the distance where the killer had disappeared, and said in a low voice, "I will stay here and stall him. After you guys have left this place, I'll go and catch up!"

Although Nicole was worried, she still nodded and immediately entered the stealth state to escort Xiang Yun and the heavily injured Roger back in the direction they'd come from.

After seeing the three of them leave, Suo Jia finally let out a breath of relief. He didn't want his companions to be in danger because of him, but that didn't mean he would simply retreat. Seeing as that guy had dared to injure Roger, Suo Jia naturally had to return the favor. The boss would be the one to pay back the debt from his brother's fight!

Suo Jia reactivated the ice shields. With the Sea God's Trident tightly grasped in hand, he carefully inspected his surroundings. The next instant, the head of a mage came flying through the air from about ten meters away. Without even a single cry, another life had been taken!

Suo Jia spotted the mage's headless corpse gushing out fountains

of blood, then looked back at the mage's decapitated head lying on the ground, its eyes still open. Suo Jia's blood ran cold. From beginning to end, he had never figured out how the enemy had attacked!

Suo Jia sharpened his senses with extreme concentration. He knew that the number of enemies didn't matter to the homicidal maniac; that was never an issue. Unless there was a person that could overlook this guy's strength and defeat him in battle, there was no difference between one person and a thousand. The more enemies there were, the more that maniac enjoyed the slaughter!

"Swish..." While in mid-thought, Suo Jia suddenly heard a sharp, air-splitting sound and felt a sudden pain in his chest. When he looked down, he saw that the right side of his chest was furiously gushing out blood. In addition, his back felt cold as well; it was as if some kind of fluid was flowing down it!

Amidst his shock, a cold voice suddenly spoke into Suo Jia's ear. "You should just leave. If I didn't deliberately spare your life, I could've cut you into pieces with just a small push. Although you're quite powerful, you're still very lacking compared to me!"

Ignoring his wounds, Suo Jia frigidly replied to the empty air, "Why didn't you kill me? Why are you letting me go?"

After a moment of silence, the cold voice murmured, "The reason I spared you was because your actions today reminded me of a very important old friend of mine. Because of that, I lost the heart to kill you. Just go. If you want revenge, wait until you strengthen your still incomplete abilities!"

Suo Jia painfully closed his eyes. This was the first time Suo Jia had ever felt this kind of humiliation in his lifetime. There was so much power in his body, but he had been completely unable to put it to use. Rather, he couldn't even find his opponent!

With Suo Jia's sensing abilities, there was no way anybody within a ten meter radius could escape his notice even if they were

concealing themselves in some way. The issue here was that the opponent could attack from at least 20 meters away. Suo Jia couldn't detect the opponent's presence at all!

Suo Jia turned around and left the battlefield without a backward glance. He was too ashamed to stay any longer. If the opponent had wanted to kill him, he wouldn't have been able to prevent it at all as he couldn't even tell where the enemy was. If he continued to stay here, he would just be disgracing himself.

After blankly leaving the forest and reuniting with his party, Suo Jia silently led the group to the nearest city. No matter how much Xiang Yun and Nicole inquired him, Suo Jia didn't say a single word during the journey.

Suo Jia had always believed that he was very powerful, and not just by normal standards. With the help of an Epic-ranked equipment set, his growth rate had been unimaginably fast. Moreover, he even possessed a Divine Artifact. No matter how big the world was, how could anything keep him from roaming about as he pleased?

It was precisely due to this thinking that Suo Jia hadn't taken the homicidal maniac seriously. He hadn't investigated the killer nor worried about him at all. Today, Suo Jia had finally tasted retribution. There were still people in this world that Suo Jia couldn't even hold a candle to!

Suo Jia knew that he was basically an infant compared to the killer. They could just kill however they pleased and let anyone they wanted to go. On the other hand, Suo Jia couldn't even locate the enemy. The difference between them was too great, and it was downright shameful.

Upon returning to Illusion City, Suo Jia finally spoke. He looked at his three companions with a frigid gaze and said, "Because of my blind arrogance, I put everyone in danger. Right now, I would like to sincerely apologize to you all!"

Before anyone could interject, he continued, “Despite being the leader of this group, I didn’t carefully investigate or analyze the opponent, and rashly led you all into a dangerous situation. I acknowledge that the blame undeniably falls onto me. Therefore... I intend to resign from the role of the group leader!”

“What?!” Roger and Nicole cried out in shock.

Suo Jia raised a hand and stated, “There’s nothing to be surprised about. Don’t try to persuade me otherwise, I’ve already made my decision. From now on, the captain position will belong to Xiang Yun!”

Xiang Yun smiled and earnestly replied, “Indeed, you are not fit to continue as the captain anymore. Having committed such a great mistake, you can hardly absolve yourself from the blame!”

“You–! How can you say that!” Nicole couldn’t help but rebuke Xiang Yun’s words.

Roger made sure to speak up as well. With a frown, he said, “Xiang Yun, you becoming the captain is something I’ll never agree to. The only person I obey in this world is Young Master Suo Jia!”

“Haha...” Xiang Yun chuckled and shook his head. “Do you guys think I’m an idiot? Anyone that wants this captain role can take it. I, for one, have no interest. Moreover, I’m not good at this type of thing!”

Xiang Yun looked at Suo Jia in admiration and stated, “I admit that I did want to become the captain in the beginning. But as time passed, I realized how many responsibilities the captain has and how busy he is. Honestly, even if you declare me as the new captain, I can’t do it. I only like to improve my own strength, and I’m completely unskilled in operating and managing a team.”

Nicole asked, “In that case, why did you speak to Suo Jia like that?”

“Yeah!” Roger retorted. “Saying stuff like Young Master Suo Jia

isn't fit to be captain. Let me ask you, if he doesn't take the role then who will?"

Xiang Yun calmly answered, "Suo Jia was undoubtedly too arrogant and rash this time. Without knowing who the enemy was, he blindly led his group into danger. This kind of mistake is one that he needs to account for. But what earned my admiration was that he was able to take the initiative to admit to his mistake and even resign from the captain role!"

Xiang Yun smiled at Suo Jia and sincerely said, "The captain position is something that you can indeed no longer be. However, I don't think we need a captain. We're all partners, comrades-in-arms, siblings that have gone through life-or-death situations together! That's why I don't think we need any captain. What we need is a boss!"

"Boss?" Roger and Nicole didn't understand. "What's the difference between a boss and a captain? Don't we always call Young Master 'boss'?"

Chapter 372 – Regardless Of Everything Pt.1

Xiang Yun said, “You guys might not have noticed, but I’ve actually never called Suo Jia ‘boss.’ In my opinion, he’s just a companion. We’re all members of the same group. The only difference between the captain and the group members is their roles. Now that an issue has come up with his duty, he naturally has to account for it. Otherwise, how could we call ourselves a team?”

He paused here for a moment before continuing, “But a boss is different. A boss doesn’t need to explain anything to us, he is just a ‘big brother’ who guides us. Even if he makes a mistake, he isn’t obligated to justify himself in any way. No matter what he does, we, as younger brothers, have no right to chide our older brother. That would be equivalent to disrespecting our elders and our family, which we would have to be punished for!”

“Xiang Yun!” Suo Jia stood up, extremely moved by Xiang Yun’s words. “I agree. Your words couldn’t be more right. We don’t need a captain but a boss, a big brother. And nobody else is more suited for that position than you are!”

“Haha,” Xiang Yun chuckled and shook his head. He honestly replied, “While my temperament and personality are fit for a big brother, I still don’t have the ability to manage the group. You should know that I don’t have any interest in such privileges. My only goal is to keep improving my own strength and challenge that sword demon and his eternal evil blade! I will restore my family’s famed martial prowess reputation!”

Xiang Yun looked straight into Suo Jia’s eyes and stated, “Although you made a mistake this time, I believe from observing you this whole time that you are still the only person in this group who has the ability and is willing to serve the entire team!”

Xiang Yun turned around and spoke to Nicole and Roger, “A boss

not only has the most power in the group, he or she also has the most duties. They have to make appropriate arrangements for the group members' everyday lives and their training, consider the group's future growth, formulate team policies, plan out the journey, etc. These alone are tasks that would take way more than several hours a day!"

Roger nodded in understanding and smiled. "Now that you mention it, that's true. Ever since I've started following Boss Suo Jia, I haven't once needed to plan out what to do. Boss always seems to arrange everything. All I need to do is follow his directions!"

"Yeah, that's right!" Nicole's eyes lit up in excitement. She praised, "Young Master is very amazing. You don't know how much he does behind the scenes, planning what to do and future moves. You guys don't know this, but my country's old duke who was widely known for scheming was defeated by Suo Jia! What's more, Suo Jia schemed right back at him to win, haha!"

Xiang Yun nodded in agreement. "Mhm, that's why I recognized Suo Jia as leader. Although he definitely messed up this time because he was careless and made a miscalculation, he's still the one who successfully formed and led this group here!"

Xiang Yun turned to look at Suo Jia as he praised, "Moreover, the most admirable part is that, in the face of danger, he didn't just run like the other scoundrels. Rather, he let us escape first and stayed behind to delay the enemy. This kind of leader is one whom I, Xiang Yun, approve of!"

"No!" As soon as Xiang Yun said this, Suo Jia interjected, "Since I've committed an error, I am no longer fit to be the leader. This position..."

"Oh, please!" Xiang Yun interrupted. "Nobody is perfect. Who doesn't make mistakes? If a leader was deposed just because of a single mistake, there'd be no leaders in this world. I don't know

about other groups, but nobody in this one can do a better job than you. Go ahead and ask Roger and Nicole if they'd be willing to accept anyone else!"

Roger and Nicole furiously shook their heads back and forth, looking like rattles. Roger boomed, "No way! The only person I will ever recognize as my boss in my lifetime is Suo Jia alone. I refuse to accept anyone else!"

"Yeah, me too!" Nicole nodded and hurriedly added, "I only came here because of the Young Master. If Young Master isn't the boss, I won't bother to serve; my younger siblings are still at home waiting for me and need someone to take care of them!"

Xiang Yun smiled and said, "How about it? Now I'm sure you can see that if we change bosses, our group will immediately break up. That's why...regardless of whether you want it or not, you have to continue acting as the leader!"

Suo Jia let out a helpless sigh and with a wry smile replied, "Oh, you guys...so basically, I'm not allowed to give up even if I want to, huh?"

"Hehe." Roger smirked. "That's right, Young Master. We won't let you off easy if you want to be lazy for once. These are tethers you must continue wearing. Don't bother trying to hand them off to someone else!"

Suo Jia shook his head, slowly regaining his cool. Since he had to continue being the boss, there were many things he would need to consider.

Suo Jia gestured for everyone to sit down. "In regards to that homicidal maniac, I know that all of you have personally witnessed his power and his methods of killing. You have also all felt it as well. Therefore, I'd like to hear everyone's opinions!"

Xiang Yun had a serious expression on his face as he answered Suo Jia, "Very powerful! Not just a normal level of strength either.

His attacks alone aren't too strong, and in that sense I think I can easily defeat him. However, that mysterious body splitting technique is one I have no idea how to defeat, nor am I confident in trying to block it!"

"Mmmm." Roger nodded and replied in a trembling voice, "That guy is too terrifying. I didn't even know when he appeared, all I felt was my back going numb and then all the energy in my body disappearing. Only after I'd fallen to the ground did I see him standing behind me. That kind of enemy is way too terrifying!"

"Yeah..." Nicole agreed and added in bewilderment, "I saw three people stronger than me in the fight today. Their sneaky attempts to strike the killer were even faster than mine, but all of them fell to the ground within ten steps from the killer's body, their corpses shredded into tons of pieces! If I had gone, the result wouldn't have changed either!"

Nodding his head in a dignified manner, Suo Jia rumbled, "What do you guys think of his tactics? Can anyone summarize what kind of strategy he uses?"

The other three simultaneously shook their heads in reply. Xiang Yun said, "Our interaction with him was too short, we haven't gathered enough data. I can't figure out any of his characteristics, nor can I come up with a strategy to counter the opponent's tactics!"

Suo Jia sighed, then said in a solemn voice, "Alright, in that case, I'll give a simple rundown of my analysis!"

Suo Jia pondered for a bit before continuing, "From my analysis, while the opponent's rapier seems extremely intimidating and razor-sharp, his true method of killing is a wire!"

"What? A wire?!" the others cried out in disbelief.

Suo Jia didn't give an in-depth exclamation and instead reached into his interspatial ring to pull out a very thin tendon from a

beast, wrapping the ends around the backs of two chairs.

Suo Jia pointed at the thin wire and asked the three standing a few meters away, “Look at that. From your position, can you see that thin line?”

They shook their heads. The tendon was transparent and colorless, as well as extremely thin. There was no way they could see it. After linking this with the events they’d witnessed today, the three of them finally understood.

In order to help them gain a deeper level of understanding, Suo Jia picked up a candle on the table and swiftly swung it down towards the fine line...the candle was instantly split in half!

Tossing the broken candle aside, Suo Jia declared, “The opponent’s weapon should be an extremely durable, clear, transparent wire that’s even thinner than a strand of hair. Something that thin is sharper than any blade. If you ran full speed into it, the force would be enough to instantly slice you into pieces. This is the homicidal maniac’s true killing move!”

Everyone in the room fell silent. After a long while, Xiang Yun finally said, “If the wire is thin and sturdy enough, it would be sharper than any other weapon out there!”

“Mhmmm.” Roger added with worry, “And because it’s clear and colorless, it’s impossible to detect. Upon contact, it’s no different from running into a blade.”

“Also!” Nicole yelled, her face just as pale as Roger’s, “As warriors, we all move extremely quickly and can cover a hundred meters in just a few seconds. If we flew into that clear and colorless wire at such speeds, it would become the most fearsome and lethal weapon, one that we have no way to defend against!”

Suo Jia nodded at their analyses and continued, “In addition, perhaps you’ve all overlooked this, but aside from that wire being thin, transparent, and extremely durable, it can most likely ignore

any kind of energy defense!”

“What?!” The other three stood up in shock. Roger cried out in fear, “How could such a thing exist? Isn’t that too outrageous? Doesn’t that basically make it unrivaled?”

“Unrivaled?” Suo Jia smiled, but didn’t explain. Instead, he turned around to look at Xiang Yun, who was sure to know the answer.

Xiang Yun met Suo Jia’s gaze and bitterly laughed before turning to answer Roger. “Roger, the unrivaled one isn’t the weapon, but the person. Although that wire is very formidable, any combat skill that has been perfected can pretty much be called unrivaled. You shouldn’t be admiring others right now, but rather asking yourself why you haven’t perfected your own combat skills yet!”

“But...” Although Nicole agreed with Xiang Yun’s words, she still decided to ask, “Even though you can say that, I still won’t be able to see that wire no matter how powerful I become!”

Chapter 373 – Regardless Of Everything Pt.2

Xiang Yun rolled his eyes and returned, “Nicole, why are you comparing your weakness to another’s strength? If you let him set up the wire, then you obviously won’t be his match. However, you can’t forget that you’re a thief. I’m sure you don’t need me to tell you when to make your move.”

Nicole paused in realization. “I understand. Thieves have to wait in the darkness and use Instant Kill at the most opportune moment. If I insist on making my move with that guy’s wire in front of me, I’d be a complete idiot. As long as he hasn’t set up the wire, I can easily kill him in a single move!”

Roger was still confused. With furrowed brows he asked, “Although your words make sense, I still can’t figure out how I could possibly defeat the opponent no matter how strong I become. There’s no way I too can just wait and hide in the darkness before launching a sneak attack. I’m not skilled at such things!”

Xiang Yun didn’t know how to respond to Roger’s complaints. Seeing this, Suo Jia lightly coughed and said, “Roger, I have to admit that if you encountered the maniacal killer in that forest, you would definitely lose. However...does that mean you’d lose in other environments as well?”

“Oh!” Roger’s eyes lit up at this and he excitedly stated, “That’s right, if we happen to be in the rocky valley, I can guarantee that before he comes close to me, I’d completely overpower him. My Sling Kick is quite powerful, and using the slopes and the walls of the ravine, he wouldn’t even be able to think of finding my figure!”

“Haha,” Xiang Yun nodded in agreement. “True. If I could perfect my family’s Absolute Protection skill to the depths of its profoundness, I wouldn’t be scared of some wire at all. My skills wouldn’t be inferior to the opponent’s!”

Suo Jia replied, “Indeed. The reason we were defeated is because the opponent’s skills are clearly far above ours. In addition, the battlegrounds were the opponent’s territory, the place best suited to his abilities. Us losing wasn’t surprising whatsoever!”

He proudly puffed out his chest and declared, “If the battlegrounds were underwater, which of you could be my match? I wouldn’t even fear millions of people!”

“That’s...” Xiang Yun, Nicole, and Roger couldn’t help but freeze at that. When they thought about it, encountering Suo Jia in the depths of the sea meant their best option would be to commit suicide. At least they’d die more painlessly that way! It could be said that Suo Jia in the water was much more powerful than the crazy killer in the forest. Suo Jia would truly be unrivaled!

After seeing their dumbstruck expressions, Suo Jia continued, “That’s why you guys shouldn’t undermine yourselves. Think about it. For the wires to work, there needs to be trees to tie them to. If we were in the plains, that guy wouldn’t be able to put them to use. That’s why he’s known as the King of Forests. That’s all there is to it. The difference between us isn’t actually as big as it seems!”

“Whoa!” Roger cried out with excitement. “Does that mean I could easily defeat him on level footing? Is that what you’re saying?”

“No!” Suo Jia firmly shook his head. “I’m telling you all not to become dispirited, but I don’t want you guys to get arrogant either. Remember, even on level footing we’re still not his match!” Suo Jia thought back to that blade piercing through his chest. The fierce pain still lingered in his body.

Suo Jia turned and give a hard look at Roger. “In the forest, the enemy can definitely go up against thousands of people alone. But even on flat ground, we still aren’t his match in our current state, because the opponent’s skills are far better than ours!”

Suo Jia slowly stood up and declared, “I hope that everyone will focus all their energy and concentration on training for a time. I don’t ask that you be able to defeat that guy in the forest, because that’s impossible, like how none of you can defeat me in the water. I only ask that you guys be able to contest him on flat land!”

Suo Jia started to walk towards the door, but stopped for a moment to add, “In the next half a year, we’ll each find a place to train with our own methods. After half a year, we’ll meet here again. Six months from now, we’ll go and challenge that maniacal killer again. When that time comes, I will be in charge of clearing out the area and giving everyone a chance to fight on level ground. If we are still unable to defeat the killer, we’ll just all die together there!” Suo Jia strode out.

The other three watched as Suo Jia disappeared outside, frozen for a long while. Eventually, Xiang Yun sighed, “It looks like our failure and flight this time was a huge blow to Boss’s ego. However, I support his decision. We can’t always run from the same enemy, or else our ambition will disappear!” With this, he stood up and left the room as well, without a single glance back.

“Phew...” Nicole’s eyes flashed with determination as she murmured, “It seems that if I don’t train with everything I have, I won’t be able to help the young master. In fact, I’d become a burden on the whole team! Alright, either way, I’ve already offered my life to Young Master. Let’s do this!” Nicole’s figure flashed and she instantly disappeared from the room like a ghost.

As Roger watched Nicole leave, his face flushed red, then turned pale. Strictly speaking, this failure was on Roger. Out of the entire group, he’d been the only one who had suffered a fatal blow. Up until the moment the strike had landed on him, he had never figured out where the enemy had been.

Roger lowered his head to look at his body which had begun to shiver uncontrollably. As a warrior, he’d looked at his prey with pitying glances many times before. As long as he made a move,

he'd be able to annihilate the opponent. In his eyes, those weak opponents were like ants. Even if he killed them, his heart wouldn't waver; nobody felt sad for stepping on an ant.

But now, he'd changed from the hunter to that pitiful ant. His opponent had used those pitying and contemptuous eyes to look at him as he was struck to the ground like a novice. He could do nothing without any idea where the enemy was!

“Bang!” Roger smashed the teacups with his fist. Since he'd first joined the group, Roger had always felt extremely depressed. He'd first lost to Xiang Yun in the martial arts competition, and then he'd come in last in the group in mental training. Now he'd also become the greatest burden. The words Nicole had just said were actually a perfect description of him!

Chapter 374 – A Major Transaction Pt.1

A burden? An inconvenience?!

Bitter tears slowly trickled down Roger's cheeks. When had he fallen to this point? Before...even when he'd just been a slave, he had been accepted publicly as the leader of a hundred thousand slaves. But now? He'd already become a no-good piece of trash?

Although Suo Jia, Xiang Yun, and Nicole hadn't complained about Roger, and Suo Jia had even blamed this failure entirely on himself, this was also precisely why Roger was having a harder time forgiving himself!

Roger really wanted to leave, but he owed Suo Jia way too much. As a man, leaving now would be like ignoring the favor he owed Suo Jia, and what kind of man would he be if he did that?

Roger tightly clenched his fists, his body shaking as he closed his eyes. Even Nicole was willing to risk her life to train more; as a grown man, there's no way he could lose to her, right? After all, they all had their own lives; if Nicole was willing to throw all stakes for this group, Roger had to go even further!

With a stamp, Roger's body leapt up and he jumped out the window. A few after-images appeared as his body swiftly leapt over the wall, disappearing without any other traces.

Putting aside the personal training Xiang Yun, Nicole, and Roger were going under, Suo Jia had returned to the inn at Illusion City and was lying down on a bed, gazing at the roof. His mind was swiftly calculating what to do next.

Suo Jia knew that he was still a long way before being able to defeat the opponent. It honestly wasn't something he could do within half a year at all. However, the problem was that they needed to challenge the killer once more in six months on this very day; Suo Jia had already declared this. If they didn't win then,

everyone would die together there!

After thinking in silence for a long while, Suo Jia finally sat up, his eyes glowing with a fierce and sharp light of determination. He had finally resolved to use Exhaustion Training Method to improve his techniques again!

At the moment, Suo Jia was already seventeen years old. Roughly 8-9 years ago, he'd once used the Exhaustion Training Method to improve his strength, but Suo Jia had only used it for one period before stopping. Now...this technique seemed to be the only way that Suo Jia could rapidly boost his power!

Although he had decided what to do about training, that wasn't all Suo Jia planned to do. Focusing on that alone would be a waste of time, and how could he bear to do that? Training and earning money were both things that couldn't be interrupted, that was an absolute rule!

Of course, using the Exhaustion Training Method meant it was impossible to run back and forth doing business. The technique required one to expend all their magic power and spirit power and slowly recover. Once the power levels returned to a full state, a small but amazing growth in strength would appear!

If Suo Jia was out running errands while still drained or just after recovering, what would he be able to do against magical beasts? It would be equivalent to throwing his life away!

After thinking it over for a long time, Suo Jia was only able to come up with one way to earn money: to utilize his luck and help other people enhance their equipment. However, this had high production cost and Suo Jia only had around 60 million coins left.

Suo Jia pulled out a notebook and inspected it carefully. Written inside were detailed records of the results Suo Jia had after enhancing 500 pieces of equipment. Each success or failure had been duly recorded.

Luck wasn't something visible or tangible but rather illusory. However, that didn't mean it was patternless. Suo Jia wracked his brain over the numbers written, performing non-stop mental calculations!

Finally, he let out a long breath. After silently studying the notes and doing some math, Suo Jia's eyes lit up!

After organizing the data, he had concluded that the rate of success after two failures was 50%, after three was 65%, after four was 80%, and after five, was currently 100%. But judging by this pattern, the chance of success after five failures should actually be 95%!

Of course, the sixth try was an opportunity Suo Jia would never waste on someone else. Suo Jia's own equipment set hadn't yet completed enhancements, so why would he help someone else do theirs? But all the tries before five failures could be used to earn money!

Every hundred enhancements, there would be around 20 occurrences of two failures, 10 of three failures, 5 of four failures, and 1 of five failures. In addition, based on experience, it was highly likely that the attempt after four failures would succeed, about eight of ten tries. That meant it was profitable for Suo Jia to help others enhance their equipment!

Suo Jia grabbed a paper and pen and did some more calculations. In the end, Suo Jia concluded that every hundred attempts, there would be around five occurrences of four successive failures, which could be used to enhance up to rank seven. Although there was only an 85% chance of success, Suo Jia believed that there'd be people willing to risk it at a suitable price!

Based on a 30% chance success rate, enhancing equipment to rank six would require three hundred million. Each rank seven gem cost a hundred million, and at 30% chance, nobody knew how many gems would be needed to successfully reach rank seven. Any

failed enhancements on equipment rank six and below didn't affect the equipment itself, but rank seven and above failures meant the equipment's rank would fall back to zero.

Statistically, there were actually many people on the Greater Trade Routes that had rank six magic equipment sets. But there were extremely few that had rank seven ones. With a 70% risk of failing that would result in starting all over, most people didn't dare try unless they had an extremely large amount of money.

But Suo Jia didn't have this issue. Suo Jia had at least an 80% chance success. Out of every ten tries, eight would succeed and only two would fail—no pressure at all! This was the data that Suo Jia had gotten from enhancing over 500 pieces of equipment, so it was definitely reliable!

Suo Jia's current problem was how much he should be charging. By norm, enhancing equipment to rank six required three gems each of ranks 1-6, totaling three hundred million coins. With the addition of three rank seven gems, it would cost six hundred million coins total, assuming that all resulted in success! But in reality, Suo Jia only needed two hundred million to enhance the equipment!

Of course, Suo Jia wasn't an idiot. Although this kind of business would earn him money, he didn't forget to calculate in possible failure. Six hundred million wasn't that much to begin with; Suo Jia could earn 1.4 billion just from a single shipment of pickaxes. If someone paid him six hundred million to enhance an equipment from rank six to seven, Suo Jia would definitely refuse!

In reality, although the difference between the ranks was only one, it was also the most troublesome transition. According to records, the unluckiest person in history had failed to upgrade to rank seven 74 times in a row. In the end, the person lost his family fortune and stopped trying.

After contemplating this matter for a long while, Suo Jia finally

made his decision. He would offer to enhance to rank seven for two billion. Although it was possible that nobody would be willing to pay this extremely high price, Suo Jia would rather lower the price later rather than ask for less now, as that would lead to a loss of the income he should've made.

Excitedly jumping off his bed, he prepared his things and rushed to Illusion City's Adventurer Union. Spending ten million coins, he asked them to send out the news that he would enhance equipment for only two billion, guaranteeing that it would be boosted to rank seven. The Adventurer Union would acknowledge a collateral that Suo Jia would have to pay if the enhancement failed, all the way until it reached rank seven!

As for the transport of the equipment, the Adventurer Union would be responsible for that as well. There were air delivery services on the Greater Trade Routes, with Lightning Falcons as the fastest carriers. There would be a scheduled flight every day. Although they couldn't carry very large things, smaller sized items weren't a problem.

After sending out this news, Suo Jia rushed to the auction house and spend another ten million to rent out their largest and most luxurious workspace for half a year. Within it were a bedroom, bathroom, and a living room. It could be said that everything one could possibly need was supplied. This was a perfect security measure. If anything was stolen from there, the auction house would compensate for all losses tenfold!

The reason Suo Jia did this was because there definitely wouldn't be anyone that would dare to display bad behavior in this kind of place. Anyone that did would definitely end up on the Adventurer Union's list of tasks for the entire world to hunt them down. At the moment, the person that held the record for staying uncaught while on that list was an Epic ranked hero on the Greater Trade Routes. However, he'd only managed to stay on the run for about six years.

Suo Jia nailed the large sign he'd made last time onto the door, and returned to the bedroom to begin the Exhaustion Training Method. After all...this was the safest place to do it, even more secure than his home. Even if he became completely drained, nobody would dare to cause trouble here. The Adventurer Guild's top three hitmen were SSS ranked! They'd be able to assassinate even an Epic ranked hero.

After spending an hour, Suo Jia had used up all his magic power and spirit power in that room. He dizzily rested for half an hour before opening the doors and starting his business.

Although his face was deathly pale, spirit exceptionally drained, Suo Jia couldn't help but grow excited when he saw that huge hoard of people outside. However, Suo Jia would first only accept rank one equipment! This would minimize production costs.

The only reason he was accepting losses as he waited for guaranteed successive failures to occur after hundreds of attempts was to search for the tell-tale patterns! Once he witness it happening, he'd start to enhance the equipment of the customers that had paid two billion.

Chapter 375 – A Major Transaction Pt.2

Suo Jia made some rough calculations: if there were around 500 people outside and each person had 5 pieces of equipment, then he'd have to enhance 2500 total. In other words, as long as Suo Jia had the energy, he could continue doing it forever.

He went out and bought 20 rank one gems, and two each of gems from ranks 2-7. Although Suo Jia only had about 40 million coins on him, he could also get bank overdrafts on his merchant card!

Upon returning the room, he sat down and silently focused on restoring his spirit and magic power while also waiting for news from the Adventurer's Union. Without a task given to him, he wouldn't be able to start. Otherwise, he wouldn't have [high-ranked] equipment to enhance even if he got a chance to; if the opportunity after five successive failures was used to enhance mere rank one equipment, it would be a major loss.

Time always seemed to crawl when waiting. Even though only ten minutes had passed, it felt like several hours. Based on Suo Jia's calculations, there was no way a request from far away could reach here yet. After all, shipping items over long distances took time. However, Suo Jia believed that there were definitely people within the city that also needed these advanced enhancements!

Just then, a staff member from the auction house came over while carrying a wooden box. He lowered his head to say a few words to Suo Jia, then passed the box over into Suo Jia's hands.

Since he only had half a year, Suo Jia was limited to sending out ten offer notices, and he could only accept one piece of equipment per offer. Whether he'd continue sending out notices or not would depend on how he allocated his remaining time!

With the box in his arms, Suo Jia returned to the room and closed the door behind him. He then began to enhance equipment from the people outside through his window and soon...the first

successive failure appeared! Then three successive failures, and four! The phenomenon of four failures occurring in a row appeared about once every twenty attempts.

“Ding!” Suo Jia looked over in satisfaction at the equipment that was now glowing gold. The first request had been completed. Even though enhancing all that rank one equipment was a waste of money, the value of that single piece of rank seven equipment was still a bit under two billion. When subtracting production costs, he had still managed to earn a net profit of 1.8 billion in 20 minutes!

With the box of equipment in his arms, Suo Jia turned around to leave so that he could hand the items over to the auction house. Their communications sector would then be able to coordinate the transmission of this completed task!

But as soon as he left the room, he was surprised to discover that a member of the staff was anxiously waiting outside the door with a huge pile of different sized boxes!

Suo Jia stared at the nine boxes before him in astonishment, and realised that before the offer he'd sent had even left this city, Illusion City's people had already accepted all of them. At the moment...the Thunderbirds carrying the message were probably still far from reaching their assigned destinations!

Upon seeing Suo Jia walk out, the staff member's eyes lit up as he quickly said, “Mister, these nine pieces of equipment have been transported here, please take them!”

Suo Jia nodded and reached out to accept the boxes. “This is the equipment that has just been enhanced, can you help me transfer it?”

“Mhm!” The worker nodded and looked at Suo Jia in admiration. “That's right, the president of the auction house wants to meet you, would you be able to...?”

Suo Jia narrowed his eyes slightly. He could reject this request,

but he was currently living and eating in the auction house, as well as operating under their protection. Although he had paid for all this service, it was still undeniable that he was under their care; he couldn't refuse this request.

Suo Jia agreed, "Alright. Please help me carry these boxes in and watch over them for me while I go meet the head right now!"

The staff member nodded excitedly and after giving Suo Jia directions, bent down and started to move the boxes. Meanwhile, Suo Jia swiftly strode towards the president's office.

As soon as he entered the room, a stout middle-aged man with golden hair warmly welcomed him with a friendly handshake. "So you are Mister Suo Jia? I've heard from the workers that you're currently accepting requests from outside; they said that you can enhance equipment to rank seven with just 2 billion?"

Suo Jia couldn't help but grow excited. Based on what the president had just said, Suo Jia could already deduce the underlying intent. And as a merchant, Suo Jia obviously knew how to negotiate prices as well.

Suo Jia frowned slightly and with a bitter expression, sighed, "I won't bother hiding anything from President; the reason I'm willing to lose so much money to enhance other people's equipment is for the sake of trying to find a pattern in the process. I'm accepting these rank seven enhancement tasks only to figure out a correlation in the enhancement success rate. Honestly speaking, I've been losing money this whole time and yet I still haven't found any regular trend!"

From the president's somewhat doubtful and questioning gaze, Suo Jia could tell that the opposite party clearly didn't believe that Suo Jia really wasn't making any money. No matter what, Suo Jia was still a merchant after all; what kind of merchant would do business that would only give losses?

Suo Jia's heart sped up slightly as he continued, "Perhaps you

might not believe me, but you can go inspect it yourself; I earned nearly 9 billion just from shipping pickaxes here, yet I've wasted all that money in these past few days alone. By this point, I've already reached a negative amount on my merchant card!" Suo Jia pulled out his card and passed it over to the president!

"Oh?" Doubtfully accepting the card and swiping it across a groove on his desk, the president saw that indeed, the number on the card was negative—in the hundred millions even!

He stared at Suo Jia in astonishment and exclaimed in disbelief, "Heavens! What exactly are you thinking? I know you earned over 8 billion before; you'd really be willing to spend all some imaginary pattern?"

Suo Jia nodded and bitterly laughed, "That's right, I can only bet now. If I can't find any pattern, then my efforts the past year or so will be wasted. Just paying back my overdraft would be a nightmare."

The president returned the card to Suo Jia. "Originally, I was planning on discussing business with you, but it looks like my hopes have been destroyed!"

Suo Jia inwardly laughed to himself in amusement but his expression didn't change. "However, my investments haven't all been wasted. I've just found a tiny hint of a trend, but...enhancing one piece of equipment for just 2 billion is still a clear loss. After all, I spent about 3 billion on each equipment enhancement!"

"What?!" The president stood up in shock and asked incredulously, "You mean to say that you really did find some pattern? How could that be possible?!"

Suo Jia nodded firmly and confidently answered, "I can pretty much guarantee no losses if I spend 2.3 billion on an equipment, and I can even earn a bit if I do it for 2.5 billion!"

Suo Jia then resolutely declared, "It's decided, I'll ask for 2.5

billion the next time I send out my offers. I'm sure that I can definitely earn money in this field!"

"Very good!" The head slammed the table and stated, "In that case, I'll get straight to the point. You want 2.5 billion, right? Then I'll accept your offer for 2.5 billion per piece of equipment. How does helping me enhancing some equipment sound?"

"Hm?" Suo Jia asked in confusion, "What? President also wants to enhance equipment? If President is personally asking for it, I'd enhance it for just 2 billion, haha. I only hope that President will continue to take care of little me in the future as well!"

Chapter 376 – Sudden Advancements Pt.1

“Hehe...” The president winked at Suo Jia and lowered his voice to say in a mysterious tone, “I’m not a warrior, I’m just an average person; there’s no way I’d have so much equipment to enhance. I’m just doing this for the Union...”

“Oh!” When Suo Jia heard these words, he suddenly realized the meaning behind the president’s mysterious expression. After some hesitation, Suo Jia replied, “Alright, President, you can decide the price, I only ask for 2.5 billion! I won’t ask for any more!”

The President couldn’t help but smile once he saw how understanding Suo Jia was. “How about this, I’ll hand over 3 billion per piece of equipment, but in reality you’ll take 2.7 billion and I’ll take 60% of the remaining amount and give 40% of it to you. What do you think?”

Suo Jia nodded with a smile. If Suo Jia didn’t take the extra portion of money, the president wouldn’t be willing to make this request of him; after all, refusing to accept the offer would mean Suo Jia wasn’t directly involved, and the president would be concerned about Suo Jia informing others of the offer. Now that both were tied by the offer of money, this concern no longer existed.

The head leaned in to speak into Suo Jia’s ear, “Little one, go out and issue another offer. But this time, ask for 3.5 billion, hehe. I know that nobody will accept, but it’s just for the sake of increasing the price. Otherwise, it will seem suspicious on my part if I accept it for 3 billion.”

Suo Jia agreed excitedly. “Not a problem. I’ll just directly take the equipment you want me to enhance to my room later. It would be great if you could send two people to help me!”

After finishing negotiations, Suo Jia returned to his room to continue enhancing equipment without stopping. Two hours later,

ten of the requested items were finished. After paying back all the overdraft money, he had made a net profit of 1.8 billion! At the same time, he'd also enhanced his own trident to rank eight! Enhancing an equipment to rank seven required 4 failures in a row, while enhancing to rank eight required 5 failures in succession.

Once he sent the ten completed equipment back out, Suo Jia transmitted out another ten rank seven enhancement offers worth 3.5 billion each. By the time Suo Jia had returned to his room, the president had already sent a large pile of magic equipment there.

Suo Jia noticed that all of these items were at least Legendary ranked or part of Epic ranked sets. After all, this place wasn't inferior to Holy Light Empire. A dozen or so Epic ranked heroes appeared on the Greater Trade Routes every century, and Legendary ranked heroes were even greater in number. In other words, high ranked equipment like this wasn't at all rare. Only the highest ranked equipment sets like the Atlantis set were harder to come by.

However, although there were lots of Epic ranked equipment, completing an entire set was an extremely difficult—almost unimaginable—task. At the moment, only the seven top warriors had complete sets. Suo Jia's case was special, while he had completed the set, very few people knew of this and the news hadn't spread.

Because Suo Jia was currently using the Exhaustion Training Method, he spent a large amount of his time every day training. He would first activate a ton of magic to drain his magic power and spirit power, and then spend a long time recovering before finally starting work. Thus, Suo Jia only accepted 200 pieces of equipment per day to enhance 10 pieces of equipment to rank seven. Despite this limit, Suo Jia was still able to gain a huge profit of 3.5 billion each day!

Unfortunately, such days would not last forever. By the time Suo

Jia had reached 60 billion on his merchant card, the customers outside his door had all but disappeared. All the warriors that had needed to enhance their equipment to rank one had been satisfied.

Without a large amount of rank one equipment, Suo Jia's work naturally stopped as well. With lack of better option, Suo Jia could only hang up a sign that stated he'd be willing to accept rank two equipment requests for only 4 million, or the cost of 2 rank two gems.

This news stirred up all the warriors again. Although it was double the price of enhancing a rank one equipment, this amount of money was nothing to these warriors, especially to group captains. The empty hall was once again filled with crowds, and Suo Jia returned to work.

After enhancing an equipment to rank eight, Suo Jia pulled another random item from the box and confidently tossed it into the enhancement chamber and swiftly threw a rank one gemstone inside as well.

“Ding!” A pitch-black fog began to gush out from the top of the equipment. Suo Jia pulled it out in curiosity; this was the first time he'd seen an equipment with the Dark attribute!

Upon closer inspection, he realized that it was an extremely oversized cloak. It had a cross composed of two silver, curved blades drawn on the back with materials of unknown origin, giving it a sinister and terrifying air. Dense fronts of cold air continued to surge out from the cloak!

“This...this is!” Suo Jia gaped in shock at the grey cloak, having fallen for it with a single glance. This was something he just could not bear to part with. He was missing a cloak like this to hide the glow his equipment gave off; after all, it wasn't something a normal cloak could mask. This piece of equipment was perfect for the job!

With a clenched jaw, Suo Jia swiftly walked over to the

president's office. Recently, he'd been helping the president earn millions of coins. Suo Jia believed that the head would definitely gift this item to him if he asked.

Suo Jia pushed open the door and raised the cloak. "President, where did this cloak come from? It's caught my eye, name your price!"

"Hm?" The head looked at him in confusion and laughed, "If anything has caught your eye, you can just take it as a gift from—"

Before he'd finished his words, the president finally got a good look at the object in Suo Jia's hands. His face immediately paled and he exclaimed in a trembling voice, "Heavens! Why in the world did they bring that thing out? Heh...I deeply apologize, but I cannot gift this equipment to you. Even if I sold myself, it wouldn't amount to even a fraction of this cloak's worth!"

"Oh?" Suo Jia grew curious. He carefully placed the cloak on the table and asked, "What? Is this cloak super amazing? How come I've never heard of it before?"

The head gestured at Suo Jia to sit and poured him a glass of water before solemnly replying, "Have you heard of the Gods' Nightfall or the Spirit Calamity?"

Suo Jia shook his head. "I've heard of Gods' Nightfall before, wasn't that the war where all the gods fell? But...what is the Spirit Calamity?"

"Haha..." The president replied with a dry chuckle. "The Spirit Calamity is pretty much the same as rat or locust calamities, but with the root of the cause being departed spirits!"

He sighed in reminiscence, "Ages ago, during the era of the gods, a Spirit Calamity broke out once. Billions of departed spirit armies flooded into the human realm and started the Spirit Invasion Wars. That was also how all the gods died, the Gods' Nightfall!"

Lowering his head to look at the grey cloak, he continued,

“Although this cloak wasn’t an item from the King of Hell himself, it was passed down from the Death God—one of the King of Hell’s two main subordinates. Although I don’t know what its rank is, it should be Superior ranked according to the auction house’s standards, and is probably worth a fixed value of one trillion! A value that will never increase or decrease.”

“A trillion, huh?” Suo Jia murmured, unable to keep himself from licking his lips in greed. In the past, this kind of amount was unimaginable. But at the moment, he already possessed 600 billion; accumulating one trillion to purchase this cloak wasn’t unfeasible!

Of course, Suo Jia was also worried about the possibility of the president pulling his leg, but since there were many informational books that could be accessed in this world, checking the president’s words wouldn’t be hard. With this, Suo Jia left the president’s office and rushed straight to the library. Indeed...this cloak was mentioned in over a hundred books. In addition, its value of one trillion coins had never changed. There was also an item that was worth even more than the Death God’s cloak; it contained a power that the Hypnos had possessed, a power that even Zeus couldn’t resist: the Hypnosis Ring! Its value reached ten trillion coins! However, the most valuable item worth a hundred trillion was the Invisibility Helmet that belong to the King of Hell, Hades! The reason that Hades was known as the unseen god was precisely because of this helmet!

Of course, these weren’t all the items left behind from the Gods’ Nightfall, these were simply some that had been placed at the auction house as awards for merchants that could earn enough money to purchase them. Although these didn’t actually count as Divine Artifacts, these Dark Weapons were not in any way inferior! The reason these three specific items had been placed at the auction house because their abilities couldn’t be better suited for merchants! The Adventurer Union, the Thief Union, etc. had

similar equipment, just with different conditions required to be met in order to obtain them.

The Invisibility Helmet, Hades' Crown, had the ability to keep the wearer in the concealed state forever. The invisibility would never be broken, and no type of searching magic would be able to detect the wearer; after all, this is where Hades' reputation as the invisible god had come from! This was the Superior ranked equipment of the gods worth a hundred trillion!

The Hypnosis Ring—the possession of Hypnos, one of the two most powerful subordinates of Hades—was created by Hypnos himself using his abilities to induce sleep. Even Zeus was helpless before this ring's power, giving its value of ten trillion!

The cloak belong to the Death God—Hades' main subordinate—who was the god in charge of the life and death of all living things. He used his ability to travel through the realm between life and death and gained enough knowledge to create the cloak. It didn't possess any defensive abilities, and its only power was to make things disappear!

In this case, disappearing meant making a physical body in this world disappear and instead enter that intermediary realm. In other words, the body didn't exist in either the living world or the afterlife, and instead remained within a nameless gap between the two. This was how the Death God traveled back and forth between the two realms to control the spirits of the dead!

The existence of this intermediate realm was inexplicable, even by the God of Death himself. Where exactly did it exist, and what were its boundaries? Regardless of the answers, the Death God could freely leave and enter this world with the cloak!

According to records, the Death God always mysteriously passed through walls or suddenly materialized. In reality, this was just the Death God discarding his concealed state and entering this realm of the living! It could be said that the cloak was the proof and key

of the intermediate realm!

The God of Death never appeared in public places. Typically, he would spend his entire day in the intermediate world. Whenever he did appear in this world, he would appear right before his target, and with a wave of his Death Scythe, take the life of his target!

Suo Jia could only blankly stare at the book. He honestly didn't understand what the cloak's ability to make things disappear really meant or what it really did just based on what he read. However, he did know that obtaining this cloak would reveal the answers to his questions.

Chapter 377 – Sudden Advancements Pt.2

Suo Jia returned to the auction house, back to his work room. Although he was in desperate need to earn the remaining amount of money to reach one trillion, he also knew that strength was the ultimate priority. In other words, he needed to continue practicing the Exhaustion Training Method.

After a while, Suo Jia recovered his energy. Sitting on his bed with his legs crossed, he carefully evaluated his new magic power and spirit power levels....and immediately grew shocked.

Suo Jia remembered that when he had first used the Exhaustion Training Method, he had managed to boost his maximum energy limit by 20%, and then each time he used the method afterwards, its effect would gradually decrease.

However, nearly ten years later, Suo Jia was now shocked to discover that his energy had been boosted 20% once more. What did this mean?

It meant that Suo Jia's prediction years ago was right. If one used this method over and over for a long period of time, the body and spirit would develop something like a resistance. But if this training method wasn't used for a while, the resistance would go down, and pretty much disappear!

Suo Jia wouldn't have dared to completely believe this kind of conjecture in the past. But now, it seemed that it was correct. He could gain 100% of the benefits, and every decade or so, his resistance would die back down. Although the resistance wouldn't entirely disappear, the effects would pretty much be restored to the point where a weak resistance would have little impact.

Suo Jia regathered his resolve and spent the next few hours using up all the magic power and spirit power in his body once more. After continuing this kind of training for a while, he finally left his training room to begin work.

Obviously, Suo Jia was suffering a lot; under such exhaustion, he was still trying his hardest to focus his energy and concentration on work. If Suo Jia had been resting instead, the Exhaustion Training Method wouldn't show results. Instead, his strength would greatly be reduced.

Time crawled by. Finally, when Suo Jia had enhanced all the equipment to rank ten, he had managed to gather a trillion coins. With his filled merchant card in hand, Suo Jia trudged to the president's office.

He threw the card onto the president's desk and tiredly declared, "Alright, President, I've already gathered a trillion here. Now...I'll be purchasing that Death God's Cloak!"

"What?!" The head looked at Suo Jia in complete shock and asked in disbelief, "You actually managed to earn that much in such a short amount of time? Impossible!"

Suo Jia chuckled and shook his head. "It wasn't in that short of a time, it's been nearly four months. Moreover, I didn't earn all of it, a large portion was lent to me by my teammates. After all, the only thing that can be purchased with money within what I can afford is this Death God's Cloak!"

The president sighed in amazement and shook his head. "I don't care how you got the money, as long as you're giving it to me, I'll definitely sell this equipment to you. There's no reason for me to refuse this offer. Hehe...with this transaction completed, I'll definitely get promoted!"

Suo Jia smiled and lazily replied, "Then I must congratulate you. I only hope that after being promoted, you won't forget the little me. If you end up with any good things to sell, you must come looking for me!"

"Haha..." The president nodded, "Of course! Absolutely...you're my most valuable customer after all. Ever since I met you, my assets have gone up several fold, and are still continuing to rise.

There's no way I could possibly forget a friend like you!"

With this, he swiftly inserted Suo Jia's merchant card into the appropriate slot in his desk to withdraw a trillion. As he passed the card back to its owner, the president said, "Alright, from today onwards, the Death God's Cloak is yours. Hehe, it seems like you've become penniless once again though!"

"That's..." Suo Jia glanced at the president in disbelief, and then down at his merchant card. He still had four hundred million remaining on it, how could that count as penniless? But thinking about it now, compared to the president that now possessed many times more wealth and his previous self that had owned a trillion, penniless couldn't be a better fitting word to describe his current four hundred million in asset.

Suo Jia shook his head bitterly and after saying goodbye, rushed back to his room with the Death God's Cloak still in his interspatial ring. He couldn't wait to give it a try!

Suo Jia reached out to pull off the Legendary-ranked black cloak he'd been wearing this whole time and immediately, the entire room suddenly lit up with a bright light. It looked like Suo Jia had become a god!

It wasn't that he looked like a god in grandeur or anything, but because of the overall effect of his complete equipment set. At the moment, Suo Jia's entire body was enveloped with a layer of multicolored light, especially the rainbow halo behind his head, which made him look especially extraordinary!

He had an old-fashioned, Western-style crown on his head, and a shining, deep blue armor that had flowing lines of energy stretching all over his body. With his back tall and straight, his face cool and handsome, it could be said that his manner was as refined as a god's. No matter what angle one looked at him from, his appearance wasn't one that a human should possess!

Suo Jia also wasn't ugly. As a mage that controlled water, he also

possessed unrivalled ability in beautification. If he could make so many people good-looking, why would he hold back on himself? At the very least, Suo Jia himself believed his image was perfect. Any imperfect part could just be fixed, something missing could be added and something excessive could be removed. It was that simple.

Right now, as Suo Jia stood in the middle of the room tall and straight, the divine-like, rainbow glow that covered his body seemed like it could purify the entire world. Under the gorgeous light, Suo Jia seemed like a figure from a dream.

However, Suo Jia didn't really care about these things right now; he'd already seen this sight countless times. At the moment, Suo Jia just wanted to know what exactly the Death God's Cloak's ability to make things disappear was!

Chapter 378 – Profound Essence Of Water

Magic Pt.1

Suo Jia unclasped the Death God's Cloak and turned around, coolly draping the cloak over his shoulders. The next instant, the rainbow glow surrounding his body instantly disappeared. Instead, the cloak emitted a thin and faint black vapor that slowly poured out from the cuffs and hem, dispersing through the air and covering the cloak's entire surface!

Although the vapor seemed pretty thick, it didn't affect Suo Jia's vision at all. However...when Suo Jia looked at his reflection in a mirror, he couldn't see his own face. It was completely covered by that floating black fog!

Suo Jia signed in awe. He knew that although the cloak didn't have any other abilities, it was definitely the world's best equipment for concealing the face and any light emitted. Most importantly, while the Death God's Cloak seemed very large, to the point where his hands weren't visible, it was extremely well-sculpted in shape and looked extremely cool! It was Suo Jia's ideal image, the one he had always dreamed of!

After relishing this fact for a bit, Suo Jia tried to release his spirit power to scan the Death God's Cloak. The next instant, he sensed an activated energy crystal at the back of his neck!

After sensing it, the next step was simple; he focused his concentration on gradually seeping it into the crystal. Instantly, he felt the largest amount of the darkest energy he'd ever felt, currently rushing about within the crystal!

Sensing Suo Jia's presence, the dark energy immediately surged outwards in a straight path. At the same time, he was shocked to discover that his body underneath the cloak instantly vanished! Suo Jia had completely disappeared from the material world!

The next moment, he appeared in a different realm. This realm wasn't just nothingness; on the outside, it seemed pretty similar to the material world. However...everything here was transparent, as if made of condensed water.

He looked around his room where all the objects within it were now clear. When Suo Jia tried to reach out to the table next to him, his hands smoothly passed through it without any form of resistance. Although it looked like it was made of condensed water, in reality it was something that didn't exist at all!

Suo Jia walked towards the wall and tried to reach out towards it but he didn't feel anything. Rather, his palm easily went through the wall and appeared on its other side. Moreover, the water-like people outside didn't react at all!

He then tried to grasp the doorknob, but similarly, he couldn't grab a hold at all and the hand passed straight through to the other side!

This time, he tried to walking through the door, and his body passed over like a mirage, appearing outside the room.

"This is—!" Suo Jia couldn't help but gape in astonishment at the translucent image of the auction hall lobby. Just then, he suddenly felt a type of energy come out from himself and...suddenly the people next to him all turned to look in his direction!

"Ah!" When Suo Jia saw their surprised expressions and noticed his surroundings were no longer see-through, he realized that he had returned from his 'disappearance'!

Suo Jia studied his cloak more closely. In general, he could conclude that he had been in the transparent world just now for a dozen or so seconds. From this, he came up with a vague theory that the rank ten Death God's Cloak allowed one to disappear for ten seconds! The extra seconds afterwards depended on Suo Jia's innate spirit power and energy.

Suo Jia couldn't help but grow wild with joy at this thought. If his predictions were correct, then his entering of the other realm meant his disappearance from the material world. And while in the alternate realm, Suo Jia was able to pass through any space surrounding him!

Suo Jia sighed in admiration and his eyes lit up in his excitement. No wonder one could never hide from the Death God's scythe. With this kind of cloak, any boundary in the material realm turned to nothingness. Even if the Death God brushed past a person, there was no way their presence would be detected!

This wasn't the same as using stealth or concealing oneself, it was completely disappearing. One could pass through its surroundings in stealth, completely hidden by warping any reflecting light. With this, the cloak user would be impossible to discover. The body itself was still from this world, but upon "disappearing", it could leave and enter another!

What did this mean? It meant that even without using magic, Suo Jia could disappear and temporarily avoid any attacks. Although this only lasted around a dozen seconds, it was more than enough!

Suo Jia rushed back to his room. He wanted to carefully calculate exactly how long he could stay "disappeared". This was extremely important for use in battle, so he had to be as accurate as possible!

Upon entering the room, Suo Jia skillfully put on the cloak and focused his energy onto that crystal once more. Immediately, a force surged out, causing a different change!

"Hm?" While Suo Jia was waiting for his body to completely disappear, the cloak suddenly billowed backwards and split into twelve black ribbons waving into the air!

"What in the—!" Suo Jia couldn't help but exclaim. The strips of the large cloak were flapping furiously around in the air like wings. There were six on each side fluttering in the wind. At the

same time, a powerful force pushed his body up into the air!

If the cloak was just cloth, the phenomena wouldn't seem particularly odd. However, each strip of the cloak was shrouded with thin feathers formed from a condensation of the black vapor. It looked as if he had sprouted twelve graceful wings!

When he tried pushing the energy, the six pairs of wings suddenly spread open completely and Suo Jia's body lurched forwards. With a loud bang, he collided into the opposite wall, instantly chipping off some of his Life Protection!

Because of the Life Protection, Suo Jia wasn't injured. However, the dizziness he felt from the collision was unavoidable. He bitterly rubbed his temples and slowly stood up. He hadn't thought that these wings would be so amazing! Their force was comparable to a rocket's thruster. These wings were definitely very powerful!

As Suo Jia studied the extended black wings, his eyes lit up. Although the Atlantis Boots granted him the ability of walking in midair agilely to the point where he could make sudden 180 degree turns, flying straight up was its greatest weakness since it lacked the propulsion force required.

But the situation was different with the appearance of these wings. With their powerful support, Suo Jia could speed up in midair and then use his Wave Walking for sudden 180 degree turns. In other words, he would be as skillful as both a bird and a fish! This was too amazing!

However, everything had a downside as well. Neither the wings nor Wave Walking could be used for long; in other words, he couldn't fly for long periods of time! Just as he thought this, his wings gradually lowered from the air behind him and returned to their original form of a dark cloak!

"Damn!" Suo Jia couldn't help but curse in disappointment when he saw this. Because he had been so elated over this new ability, he'd forgotten to keep track of the time!

With lack of better option, Suo Jia could only once again gather his spirit power and pour it into that crystal. But this time, he didn't rush to activate it. Instead, he carefully surveyed its inner contents. He quickly concluded that there were two large magic arrays connected within the crystal. In other words, this cloak only had two abilities: the first was the transformation into wings, and the second was to make him disappear!

After confirming this, Suo Jia took a deep breath and began to direct the sinister energy within towards the disappearance magic array. The next moment, his body vanished in mid-air and Suo Jia began his count!

1 second...2 seconds...3 seconds...

Suo Jia counted closely and after sixteen seconds had passed, his body was pushed by an unknown force back into the material world!

For preciseness, Suo Jia tried testing it again. But this time, when Suo Jia extended his spirit energy into the crystal, he was shocked to discover that its inner energy had disappeared!

Chapter 379 – Profound Essence Of Water

Magic Pt.2

After a few moments of confusion, he realized the reason. The energy within the crystal had its limits too. Using the power excessively would consume all of the energy, making it impossible to use again.

The Death God's Cloak and his Atlantis equipment set were different. The cloak's supporting energy came from the crystal within it, while the Atlantis equipment set could draw energy from Suo Jia's body. This meant that the Atlantis equipment didn't have a set limit in terms of usage, while the Death God's Cloak did!

After calculations, Suo Jia concluded that because he was able to activate the disappearing ability twice and the wings ability once, the Death God's Cloak could be used for around 50 seconds total, assuming each activation lasted roughly 16 seconds. Past that time limit, the Death God's Cloak would lose its functions and the crystal would need to replenish its energy before further use. As for how long it took for this replenishment, that required some more tests!

Of course, the cloak wouldn't have any limits if worn by the Death God himself, as it could directly draw the energy of death to maintain its functions. With the Death God's strength, he could maintain the disappeared and wing-transformed state for all eternity without any problem.

But despite the limits, Suo Jia was extremely satisfied with the cloak. 50 seconds was enough time to do many things. Of course, if Suo Jia hadn't already reached the peak level of the Magic Scholar rank and was nearly at the Great Magic Scholar rank, he wouldn't be able to keep the cloak functioning for so long—at most, maybe 30 seconds.

The crystal controlling the Death God's Cloak had to be a rank

ten spirit magic crystal. After all, a rank nine spirit magic crystal would simply devalue the Death God's power.

In conclusion, the spirit energy would increase with Suo Jia's own strength. The greater his spirit power, the greater the crystal energy, and the longer he'd be able to use the cloak's abilities. There was no real limit. Obviously, Suo Jia would never be as powerful as the Death God and be able to activate the cloak for eternity, but the duration could definitely be extended! More and more...

Suo Jia stroked the fabric of the cloak in content. Because it was a weapon of death, the cloak's appearance was that of black smoke, and didn't sport the typical rainbow glow. However, Suo Jia liked its appearance. If he had a choice, he'd always choose the dark appearance. At the very least, it wasn't eye-catching or ostentatious. It wouldn't tempt others' desires!

Suo Jia looked around at the room he'd lived in for nearly four months now, and couldn't help but feel his heart stir. He knew that he would soon break through to the Great Magic Scholar rank, and once he did, he would have to leave this place!

Suo Jia spent the following few days training behind closed doors, no longer bothering to enhance equipment. Although many people still came to him with requests, there weren't anywhere enough to make a profit. The gain was too little for the amount of effort he'd have to put in, so it wasn't worth it.

Finally, Suo Jia activated the Exhaustion Training Method again, doubling his magic power and spirit power once more. Aside from staying inside his room training, Suo Jia spent his time sitting cross-legged on his bed, focusing on trying to gain an understanding of water elemental magic!

Immersed in training, time passed quickly. Eventually...five months had already passed. While Suo Jia was sitting on his bed in deep concentration, attempting to understand the water element,

he seemed to faintly sense that he was on the verge of a breakthrough!

Amidst his excitement, the water element surrounding him became frenzied as well, spinning faster and faster around him in high spirits. And then...in an instant, Suo Jia felt an inexplicable enlightenment. Suddenly, many things he'd never understood in the past made perfect sense!

Suo Jia opened his eyes in admiration. At some point, his eyes had become filled with tears of excitement. The profound essence of water magic seemed to pulse brilliantly in his mind. It was clear to Suo Jia that he'd finally broken through the Magic Scholar realm, officially becoming a Great Magic Scholar!

Although the titles of these two ranks only differed by a single word, the realms couldn't even be compared to each other in terms of one's comprehension of and communication with the element. These two were on completely different levels!

Although going up a rank didn't boost Suo Jia's magic or spirit powers, he'd reached a completely different level of understanding regarding the water element and how to manipulate it!

For example, the Ice Arrow from a Magic Scholar and the Ice Arrow from a Great Magic Scholar weren't the same at all. Although its outer appearance was similar, its speed had transformed due to the different level of understanding in the element!

Suo Jia had previously sought both sharpness, speed, penetration ability, and destructive ability. This wasn't wrong. However, this wasn't the water magic's specialty. Sharpness was something the earth element possessed, while the wind element was the king of speed!

Neither of these characteristics were the focus of either water magic or ice magic. Because Suo Jia's previous comprehension of the element wasn't enough, he had been seeking these superfluous

traits and overlooking the major one! The ice magic's greatest ability was erasing!

The ice magic's profound essence lay in control and restrictions, not destruction and damage. It could be said that any living being that died from ice magic didn't suffer a painless death, but rather a tormenting one.

The Ice Arrow's sharpness, penetration, and speed weren't important. Rather, its most unique trait was the 'ice' part in its name! Without the effect of the ice, the Ice Arrow wouldn't be any different from a Rock Thorn, or even a normal arrow.

When comparing all these traits, Suo Jia could never match up to a professional archer's arrow. In addition, Suo Jia could only fire single Ice Arrows that could be used to defeat a weaker opponent in a 1v1 battle. But it would be useless against an opponent of the same level, let alone one of higher level.

In the situation where one was against an opponent of equal strength, the Ice Arrow couldn't possibly seal the enemy with its ice. Only weaklings could be bound by ice, weaklings that would be easy to kill regardless of the methods used. But these circumstances made it impossible to truly see the significance of the Ice Arrow's unique trait.

Whenever Suo Jia had encountered an enemy of equal standing or higher, his Ice Arrow had just become trash, which was clearly not supposed to happen. As the ice mage's strongest singular attack, there was no way it could be useless!

The Ice Arrow was used for controlling. Although it couldn't actually bind the enemy, a freezing environment would surely affect the speed of any person that wasn't immune to ice magic. This was the Ice Arrow's profound essence! Thus, the Ice Arrow of a Great Magic Scholar had a different name: Freezing Ice Arrow. This 'Freezing' in the name was where its complexity lay!

In addition, his comprehension of and communication with the

element didn't just transform the Ice Arrow magic, but all of the magic he'd touched upon. For example, Suo Jia had only been able to seal a target in ice with the Freezing Touch at his previous level, without actually utilizing the "freezing" part! Thus, the opponent would always be able to simply break out of the ice unaffected.

In reality, the Freezing Touch was meant to freeze the enemy from the inside and spread outwards, drastically decreasing their speed. This was actually a tactic that was somewhat like a curse that significantly cut their agility. If the enemy simply bound by ice, there was no way they'd be defeated. If all the frigid air was wasted on just forming ice, how could it harm the enemy?

But the current Suo Jia could definitely use the Freezing Touch to halve an opponent's speed, assuming they were the same level. And how would the battle change as a result? Even the fastest wind elemental warrior with their speed halved wouldn't be very fast at all. After all, the difference between covering 100m in ten seconds and covering it in twenty seconds was a huge gap, a drop from a world expert's peak level to the mere skill of a kindergartner.

Chapter 380 – Berserk Roger Pt.1

Some might question, what use would just lowering an opponent's speed serve? Once their speed dropped, their attacks and defenses would all become weaker as well. After all, with slowed movements, how could they possibly display any of their real strength when attacking? And how could their defenses be good if they couldn't block anything in time?

Ice elemental magic was the cruelest type of magic because it didn't directly kill off the opponent. Rather, it used its control to limit the enemy's mobility, weaken their attacks, drop their defense, decrease their attack frequency...thus, the strongest ice mages could wear down enemies twice their strength. This was something that no other type of mage could do.

While others could say this kind of method was too troublesome and that it was a cowardly approach, this was undoubtedly the ice magic's unique characteristic. If one sought a fierce and straightforward attack method, they would turn to fire magic, as that was its strength. In truth, if a fire mage encountered an ice mage, they'd be bored to death!

Ice Roar, Diamond Charge, and Hailstorm had also changed drastically. These moves' characteristic trait was no longer their spinning force, but their freezing and controlling abilities. Any weak opponent would undoubtedly die, and even super strong enemies that could break through these attacks would still be stuck in a semi-frozen state that lowered their actual strength before the next wave of attacks.

In the past, Suo Jia had always either directly killed his enemies or the enemy would just break through his magic and continue attacking him. This was because Suo Jia's comprehension of the ice magic and his communication with the water spirits were lacking. In reality, there was no way someone could continue attacking aggressively after getting blasted with ice magic.

Unless the opponent possessed magic immunity, their speed would definitely be lowered after encountering an ice attack. If they were on the weaker side, they could directly be frozen to death, and even if they were super strong, their agility, attack force, defensive ability, and other skills would fall.

Ice magic was extremely powerful because of its freezing ability. Even if someone broke through the magic, they wouldn't be able to resist the effect of the coldness. A single exchange of attacks would cause the enemy's status to fall, and the longer the battle went on, the more weakened they would become. Once entangled in a long fight, the victor would definitely be the ice mage!

Ice magic did have a decent ability to kill, but it was weaker in terms of attack when compared to fire magic. However, it was roughly on the same level when compared to earth magic, and superior to wind magic. Even the most basic ice magic had the freezing effect. In a battle against an ice mage, the ice magic would just seem to get stronger as time passed—although in reality, it was the opponent getting weakened.

But in that case, didn't fire magic also have a burning effect? While true, the burned state could only inflict pain on an opponent, which meant it couldn't necessarily weaken the moment. In fact, most burned victims would start attacking more violently. In a sense, while being burned meant being burdened, it also strengthened attacks. Thus, if a fire mage burned their opponent, it meant that they would have to swiftly defeat them after; if entangled in a long battle after, the fire mage would actually be the one losing!

In other words, a fire mage could either completely destroy an enemy or be killed off by the enemy, as burning an opponent raised their strength. Essentially, either victory or defeat could occur once the opponent was burned. If given the choice, all fire mages would undoubtedly choose to get rid of the existence of this burned status!

Aside from altering and strengthening their existing magics, Great Magic Scholars could also use a new magic: Ice Prison! This was a spell that used Mysterious Ice to create a frozen prison.

The Ice Prison's effect wasn't actually much different from Freezing Touch. However, Ice Prison didn't need physical contact to activate. With Suo Jia's strength, he could activate it at any moment within the range of his spiritual sense. After using the Exhaustion Training Method for nearly half a year, Suo Jia's spirit power had doubled, and his sensing range had increased by 20 meters. In other words, Suo Jia could materialize an Ice Prison anywhere within a 40 meter diameter!

But strictly speaking, the Ice Prison spell was a new system that Suo Jia had never come across before. It didn't just seal the enemy in a rectangular ice cube; that was too easy to break, and not sturdy at all.

This Ice Prison was a hexagonal prism. This mere difference in shape actually drastically increased its toughness. In addition, the Ice Prison's ability to gather massive amounts of freezing air to direct at the target without end. If the victim didn't break the Ice Prison quickly, they would most likely end up frozen to death!

The Ice Prison was pretty much just a solidly built icehouse that could keep itself eternally frozen while also having the ability to trap a person inside. In addition, it could continue repairing itself with the freezing air it gathered. If the victim wasn't strong enough, there was no way they'd be able to break through. The final result would be to freeze to death inside. Even if the victim was extremely powerful, it would take a great amount of energy to break through. In general, if they couldn't break out within 5 seconds or so, they wouldn't ever be able to.

The greatest difference between a Magic Scholar and a Great Magic Scholar was their ability to comprehend the ice magic and to utilize it. Honestly, it summed up to a difference in "freezing". The Magic Scholar focused on penetrative and destructive ability,

while the Great Magic Scholar focused on freezing and control.

There was still about a month left until Suo Jia and his companions had agreed to meet, but Suo Jia didn't spend that time resting. Instead, he and his Diamond Dragon rushed back to the first checkpoint. In a month's time, he could ship a bunch of pickaxes and earn around two billion!

Suo Jia spent the entire time familiarizing himself with the magic's functions. After all, learning and mastering were completely different stories. Being unfamiliar with his skillset meant that he could easily miss any essential and fleeting opportunity in battle. If he wanted to use it properly, he'd have to practice every day!

Finally, a month passed, and Suo Jia successfully earned 1.4 billion. In addition to the 400 million he'd originally possessed, his assets now reached a total of 1.8 billion. However, this was mere change when compared to the billions that he had previously owned.

Since Suo Jia was able to earn a lot of money from enhancing equipment, why didn't he just continue to do so? Although there were still indeed people requesting to have their equipment enhanced, the number had dwindled to a very small scale. As such, there was no longer a systematic approach of handling it. Continuing on like that would result in losing money instead—major losses even! If Suo Jia had the ability to earn 10 billion in a month, he could naturally lose that much as well!

Suo Jia arrived at Illusion City's inn very early, and chose a table in a corner to sit. After ordering some alcohol, he slowly shut his eyes, thinking over how his training had progressed the past half a year and summing up his gains and losses.

Time passed. His companions, who in the past would show up early, still hadn't appeared. Puzzled, Suo Jia aroused from his contemplation and looked at the door in concern. It couldn't be...

that they had encountered something unexpected, right?

Just then, the door opened and Roger's familiar figure appeared. Suo Jia couldn't help but feel his jaw drop in shock. Although Roger's silhouette hadn't changed, Suo Jia could not see a crimson glow enshrouding Roger's body. A fierce pressure radiated from him. Under Suo Jia's gaze, Roger slowly walked over and calmly sat down.

Suo Jia was still looking at Roger in astonishment. As Roger's collar wasn't fastened, Suo Jia could clearly see fierce scars covering Roger's chest. Some were inflicted by weapons, others by magical beasts' claws. On that tiny area of exposed skin, there were at least a dozen wounds!

These scars all overlapped with each other. Some had already healed, others were in the process and covered with thick scabs, while others had only just started to form scabs. The most horrifying part was that there were also injuries that were still bleeding! It was clear Roger had just gotten them recently enough for them to not have gotten a chance to heal. In the end, there wasn't a single piece of unmarred skin on Roger's chest.

Trembling, Suo Jia raised his head to look Roger in the eye. He couldn't imagine how Roger had spent the past half a year. Exactly what training had he gone through to have been tormented to this extent?

Roger cracked a grin and grabbed a bottle of alcohol on the table to pour himself a brimming cup and down half of it. He then poured the rest of it onto his chest, and the scarlet blood swiftly dyed his clothes dark red.

Chapter 381 – Berserk Roger Pt.2

Although Suo Jia had never been injured to this extent before, he knew that pouring alcohol on injuries as bad as that must be unbearably painful. However, not disinfecting the wounds would result in greater problems later.

Suo Jia reached his hand out and confidently activated ten Moisture Techniques. The next moment, Roger started in surprise and looked at Suo Jia in disbelief.

In the past, healing injuries as bad as this would take over hundreds of Moisture Techniques to heal. But just now, with a wave of Suo Jia's hand, Roger could feel his wounds swiftly closing themselves. A feeling of indescribable relief spread through his body. With just ten Moisture Techniques, Suo Jia had managed to complete a task that should've taken hundreds of spells!

Roger put down his glass and praised, "Boss, it seems that from beginning to end, you'll always be my boss. I had originally thought that within this past half a year, I would've been the only one that had doubled my strength. However, it looks like I still haven't been able to surpass you!"

"What?!" This time, Suo Jia was the shocked one. He stood up and asked incredulously, "What did you say? In only half a year, you...?!"

Roger shook his head and was just about to reply when a burly warrior from the table next to them roared out, "Oi! Can you two **** shut up? Can't you see that the I'm talking right now?"

Suo Jia paused, and then calmly sat down. A single sentence like that wasn't enough to make Suo Jia act. After all, the other party's crime wasn't death-worthy; as soon as Suo Jia made a move, there was no way he'd let the other survive!

"Hehe..." Roger chuckled darkly and stood up to walk over to the

warrior. Seeing this, the warrior also stood up in anger and reached out to grab the broadsword he'd placed against the nearby wall!

At this, Suo Jia immediately reached out to try to call Roger back. But the next instant, Suo Jia retracted his hand. Although he had already been promoted from the team's leader to its boss, Suo Jia had always respected the others' feelings. Although they were all part of one group, it had never been a burden. Rather, it did the exact opposite, the group was a natural harbor that each one of them could rely on!

With everyone watching, Roger arrogantly stopped next to the warrior's table and tilted his head as he spit out, "Oi! Bastard... were you talking to us just now?"

The warrior was momentarily stunned before he yelled back, "Of course I was talking to you guys. Who else here was clamoring like..."

Before the warrior had even finished speaking, Roger's eyes flashed with murderous intent. The next instant, his left leg shot out, immediately crashing into the warrior's neck. It happened so indescribably fast that nobody had even seen Roger's leg move. Time seemed to have frozen as Roger's leg curved towards the warrior.

"Bang...crash!" Time seemed to move again, and the warrior was suddenly tossed through the air like a rag doll, his body smashing onto a table and then crashing into the wall behind him, causing the entire inn to shake!

Radiating a murderous aura, Roger bellowed, "Who here is with this guy? Get out here immediately. F**k...to think he'd dare to speak like that to me, he must've been tired of living."

There was only silence in response to Roger's burst of anger. For a moment, it was so quiet one could hear a pin drop. Nobody even dared to breathe. Roger swept a defiant gaze around the room and

then glared at the few people sitting at the same table the warrior had been sitting at. “What’s your relationship with that bastard?”

“Nothing...nothing at all! We don’t know him, we just happened to sit together with him!” They couldn’t help but tremble before Roger and his demon-like air.

Since they declared themselves unrelated, Roger couldn’t really vent out his anger on them even if he tried to. After all...he wasn’t an unreasonable person. Charging through and fighting them would be acting without any justification!

Just as Roger was about to turn back to his own table, a cold voice said in disdain, “Brat, although you’re pretty decent, it’s best you don’t act too arrogant!”

Roger frozen and then turned back around with a sinister grin. He shouted out at the people in the inn, “Who said that just now? If you’ve got the guts, show yourself!”

The entire inn fell silent again. Nobody dared to claim they had spoken. Thus, Roger turned to look at Suo Jia. He believed that with Suo Jia’s spirit sense, he’d definitely know who had spoken.

As expected, Suo Jia did not disappoint. With a faint smile, he raised his glass and swirled the fine wine within it. The next instant...his right hand jerked to the side and the wine within the glass instantly froze to form a sharp Ice Arrow that shot out towards a corner of the room!

There was no way Roger wouldn’t understand the meaning of this. With a burst of energy, his legs shot his body outwards to follow the arrow into the corner.

Everyone watched as Suo Jia’s Ice Arrow flew across the air. However, it didn’t land on a person. Rather...

“Thunk!” The Ice Arrow embedded itself into the wall. At this, the spectators couldn’t help but break out into laughter. The arrow had missed. Moreover, it had missed so badly that it had struck an

uninhabited corner!

While the inn was filling with howls of laughter, Suo Jia knit his brows together. His Ice Arrow had missed within a mere distance of ten meters! This had never happened before! In such a range, his Ice Arrows were so fast they couldn't possibly be evaded.

His expression darkened as he stared at the corner. Although he couldn't see them, Suo Jia could clearly sense there was someone there. The voice just now had definitely come from this direction!

Suo Jia ignored the jeers around him and coldly snorted. At the same time, the Ice Arrow embedded in the wall suddenly exploded into a blue mist that quickly pervaded the area!

A soft hissing sound rang out, and the next instant, everyone in the inn immediately shut their mouths. As the cold mist spread outwards, it clearly outlined an attractive silhouette leisurely sitting on a chair in that corner. It was then that everyone in the room realized that Suo Jia's arrow hadn't missed at all, there really was a person. However...she had managed to dodged Suo Jia's lightning fast arrow.

Upon noticing that everyone's gazes were now concentrated on her, the graceful silhouette froze for a moment before lowering her head to look down at her body. Suddenly, she let out a cry of alarm with her beautiful voice and the figure suddenly lunged to the side, disappearing once more.

"Hmph!" Suo Jia couldn't help but snort when he saw that the other party still wanted to run. He closed his right palm into a fist, instantly causing his wine glass to shatter. At the same time, a thick white mist quickly spread outwards, bringing with a bone-chilling air, immediately enshrouding the entire inn!

"Ugh...." Everyone in the inn unconsciously hugged themselves; the air was just too cold. In a mere instant, they all had frost covering their bodies as they began to shiver uncontrollably.

With the spread of the cold air, the slender silhouette was once again exposed, this time with white frost. Seeing this, Roger excitedly began to leap towards the phantom-like figure.

Chapter 382 – News of Xiang Yun Pt.1

Upon seeing this, Suo Jia said in a low voice, “Roger, go along the right side of the wall, I’ll help you block the left side!”

Without hesitation, Roger began to bound towards the white figure from the right wall. The figure seemed to notice, and immediately turned around to run along the left wall in attempt to avoid the right side!

Suo Jia smirked and waved his left hand, causing a blue Ice Arrow to immediately fly out from his hand and fly towards the white figure as fast as lightning.

With the speed of his arrow, the distance of a dozen or so meters was covered almost instantly. However...the strange part was that the white figure seemed to have anticipated the arrow’s trajectory, and with seeming inhuman reflexes, turned sharply to evade it!

Suo Jia couldn’t help but be shocked by the white figure’s movements. At such short range, the opponent was able to make such an impossible dodge. Was that even human? It was pretty much equivalent to dodging a bullet only ten meters away. Moreover, the opponent had waited until the “bullet” had started its journey before making a move. That was beyond human ability!

When Suo Jia saw his arrow had once again missed, he clenched his teeth and immediately focused on using the Control Fruit’s ability to correct the arrow’s trajectory. Since he’d already said he would block the opponent from the left, there was no way he’d let her escape!

Everyone watched in amazement as a blue streak of ice miraculously cut a graceful arc through the air towards its original target: the white figure!

At this point, all the spectators could tell that there was absolutely no way the arrow could be dodged. At such short

distance, the arrow's high speeds made evading impossible!

“Ding!” Just as everyone was thinking that the arrow would finally hit the figure, a bright silver light suddenly flashed in front of the figure. A clear ring could be heard as the silver light collided with the arrow's blue light.

“What?!” Suo Jia stood up in astonishment and stared at the figure, his eyes filled with disbelief. For a second, Suo Jia wondered if the person before him was a god. Only a god would be able to make such a move!

But Suo Jia quickly rejected the thought. If the opponent really was a god, there would be no reason to block the Ice Arrow. After all, Suo Jia's strength wasn't anywhere close to the level needed to harm a god!

Despite the Ice Arrow's amazing speed and the fact that they were in close range, plus Suo Jia's use of his controlling ability, the opponent could still retaliate in attack the moment the Ice Arrow was activated. This was definitely not an ability a human could possess; it was much more superior!

However, although the other party had been successful in standing her own, a deep blue mist had begun to surround her as soon as the Ice Arrow shattered from the collision. Everyone could clearly see that the figure's speed instantly dropped by a third!

“Where do you think you're running?!” Roger immediately leapt into action. His legs spun like a windmill, and a succession of six kicks lashed out like a torrent onto the opponent.

If anyone else had just dodged and blocked the Ice Arrow, then been worn down by the mist, they'd definitely meet their end upon facing this new storm of attacks. But the white figure seemed to be the embodiment of miracles; everyone watched her make another god-level dodge!

In the narrow space available, the white form rocked her body

forwards and backwards, dodged left and right, and managed to evade every one of Roger's six kicks within a millimeter distance. Each of Roger's attacks brushed her clothes, but wasn't able to make contact with her body!

But after dodging all the attacks, the opposite party seemed to reach her limit. With difficulty, the figure stumbled forwards as Roger landed back on the ground and shouted as she started to flee, "I'm out, I admit defeat. How could I possibly beat the both of you by myself?"

When Suo Jia heard this familiar voice, he immediately stopped in his tracks and stopped the Ice Prison spell he had just been about to activate. Stunned, he stared blankly at the white form before him. If he hadn't heard wrong just now, that was Nicole's voice!

"Don't run!" Although Suo Jia had recognised the voice, Roger hadn't amidst his excitement. But even if he had, he would've wanted to fight first before reminiscing anyways. With a wild shout, Roger bound towards the white form once more.

Suo Jia knew that he needed to cool this guy down. Since he had the Ice Prison spell already ready to go, he immediately released it on Roger!

"Bang!" Roger, who had been charging forwards, was suddenly trapped within a sturdy Ice Prison. Before he had even realised what was going on, he was trapped in place!

Roger stared at the ice walls around him and shouted, "Boss, what are you doing? Did I go for the wrong target? Why...why did you lock me up?"

Suo Jia didn't pay any mind to Roger's shouts, and instead focused on Nicole, who was gradually inching closer. As expected, after the mist surrounding her dissipated, Nicole's dainty face appeared.

Suo Jia looked at Nicole with a warm gaze and affectionately

scolded, “You rascal, if you were here, why hide? Didn’t you know that we really missed you?”

Nicole stuck out her tongue and bashfully replied, “I came just when Roger was shouting like crazy. When I saw how unbridled he was acting, I wanted to test the results of my training this past half a year, so I went ahead and taunted him. But I didn’t think that you guys would team up to go against me!”

“Hey! Boss...this place is really cold! Hurry up and let me out...” Roger cried out miserably.

Suo Jia turned around with a smirk. “Aren’t you really amazing? It’s just a little Ice Prison, get out yourself! I believe that you can definitely do it!”

Roger couldn’t help but let out a pained expression when he heard Suo Jia’s teasing. He could tell that Suo Jia wouldn’t help; if he wanted to get out and continue drinking, he’d have to break out himself.

Roger suddenly focused all his energy, trying to break through with brute force. However, although the Ice Prison let out a cracking sound, it showed no signs of collapsing. And as soon as he let go of his energy, the cracks that he’d just managed to make swiftly disappeared. At the same time, a freezing chill blew over Roger’s body.

“Damn it!” Roger had seen Suo Jia use Ice Seal before, but that was something that could shatter with sudden force. But this Ice Prison wasn’t the same at all!

Unconvinced, Roger struggled for a few moments longer, but the result didn’t change. The sturdiness of the Ice Prison far exceeded his expectations!

Why didn’t Roger just use his powerful kicks? After all, Roger’s combat boots had an impressive shattering ability, and anything weaker than the boots would definitely crumble with a single

blow.

In reality, it wasn't like Roger didn't want to kick out. Rather, he had no room to extend his legs. The Ice Prison was just like a suit of armor that surrounded his entire body, locking Roger in place. How could someone possibly kick their own armor?

Suo Jia laughed at Roger, "Stop wasting your energy; using brute force is pointless. Use your battle qi instead; there's no other way you'd be able to escape!"

Roger let out a low curse before gathering his battle qi bit by bit. Then, he blasted it all outwards, and with a bright burst of golden light, the Ice Prison shook under the force of the battle qi. However, it still didn't break! Refusing to accept this result, Roger gathered and released his battle qi again. Then, after a third attempt, he finally broke the Ice Prison and gained his freedom!

Chapter 383 – News of Xiang Yun Pt.2

Roger gaped at Suo Jia, then blankly stared at the destroyed ice on the ground around him. “Boss, isn’t this Ice Prison of yours too strong? Even if I used battle qi first thing upon being trapped, I’d still be stuck in there for about six seconds; in such a situation, am I not just a toy on top of your palm?”

Roger then very slowly trudged over to Suo Jia with a bitter expression, “Also, having been frozen for so long as made me completely numb; I can’t even walk fast anymore. Plus, since my whole body has been desensitized, I can’t muster any strength either!”

When Roger returned to the table and began to drink in attempt to warm his body, Nicole turned to look at Suo Jia with her brows knit together, “Boss, it’s only been half a year since I saw you and you already seem to be as ridiculously powerful as that maniac killer. First was that strange Ice Arrow, then that Revolving Frozen Gas that broke my concealment, and finally that abnormally strong Ice Prison. Don’t those make you unrivaled now?”

Suo Jia sighed and shook his head. “You’re overestimating it. Although the Ice Arrow is indeed formidable, it can only be used as a surprise attack, not a main attack. Using that to defeat an opponent of equal level would be impossible. As for the Revolving Frozen Glass, while that was able to break your concealment and stealth, it wasn’t able to harm you!”

Roger, who had slowly regained some energy, said gloomily, “Even if those two things aren’t much, that Ice Prison is too much! It can trap me for at least six seconds. If we were seriously fighting, you could’ve killed me over a hundred times!”

“No,” Suo Jia answered. “Your thinking there is wrong. Although the Ice Prison trapped you, you can also think of its ice walls as similar to the Diamond Dragon’s Glacial Armor; it is also

protecting you. As long as it isn't broken, nobody outside it would be able to harm you either!"

Nicole nodded in understanding. With a breath of relief, she chuckled, "Good, it looks like I'm not too far behind Boss, haha..."

"Tch..." Roger tsked in disdain. "That's because you haven't experienced the Ice Prison yet. I'll admit that although the Ice Prison doesn't have the ability to kill me, it also emits a large amount of cold air to freeze me. In addition, I have to consume a great amount of battle qi to break out!"

Roger rolled his eyes at Nicole before continuing, "Think about it, once my battle qi is used up and my body is frozen, my speed drops, my attacks have no strength, and my defense is full of holes. By that point, how could I possibly go up against Boss?"

"That's..." Nicole's face paled. That was right...although Suo Jia's Ice Prison couldn't directly kill or even contain an opponent of equal level, it could drastically weaken the opponent. The longer the opponent was trapped, the weaker they'd get; in that way, the opponent would be worn down to death!

Thinking back now, the reason she'd acted so passively just now and directly surrendered was because of Suo Jia's Ice Arrow. Although Nicole had been able to block the physical arrow, she hadn't been able to resist against its cold air. Her speed had been dropped by a third, and as a result, she had become slower than Roger. Thus, she had been forced to admit defeat. If they had all been in their normal states, there was no way Nicole would be afraid of Roger. Even if she couldn't defeat him, there was no way Roger could defeat Nicole either.

Nicole looked up in astonishment with a dumbfounded look. "Heavens! Now that I think about it, I was being completely manipulated by Boss in the fight just now. From the very beginning, Boss had control over the entire battle!"

"Mhm, mhm...." Roger nodded in complete agreement and

praised, “That’s right, “control” perfectly describes the situation. Although Boss might not actually kill an enemy himself, his control ability allows us and the enemy to instantly change dominance and turn the tides of battle. Just like with you, he was able to break your concealment and lower your speed, forcing you to surrender!”

“Please,” Nicole rolled her eyes at Roger. “Surrender my ass. All I did was concede; I’m not an enemy, so the word ‘surrender’ isn’t even appropriate!”

Just then, Nicole glanced around her and asked, “Oh right, why are you two the only ones I see? Where’s Xiang Yun? Has he not arrived yet? It’s way past the designated meeting time!”

Suo Jia shook his head with a grave expression. “He’s not here yet. That guy is typically always punctual, so why not this time? Could it be that he got into an accident?”

“Hmph!” Nicole huffed in reply, “More like you set a bad example. Who asked you to come so late last time? Now do you finally understand what it feels like to wait for others?”

“Ha...” Suo Jia let out a dry chuckle and nodded. “That’s right, now I finally know what waiting feels like. It’s not just waiting, but also bearing with a strong sense of concern!”

“Bang!” Just then, the inn’s door suddenly slammed open. The three of them jumped at the sound and shifted their gazes over to look, thinking that Xiang Yun had arrived. However, the person entering the inn wasn’t Xiang Yun, but a shifty-eyed thief!

Amidst their disappointment, the thief loudly shouted, “Hurry, hurry, hurry! Everyone, hurry up and go watch the show! There are ten of Illusion City’s troops surrounding a blade master right now! They’ve already fought for a good while and left behind a ton of dead bodies!”

“Bang!” Immediately, everyone in the inn stood up in unison and

wildly ran out. Of course...it wasn't for a reason as simple as just wanting to watch the show. Getting a chance to watch experts fight could boost one's own experience and battle skills. Sometimes, seeing a single move was enough to raise one's strength by several fold!

Most fights were typically private. After all...after the end of the fight, the parties would be extremely weakened, having exhausted their magic power, spirit power, battle qi, and stamina. If they were attacked at such a moment, it would be extremely dangerous. Only rare chances like this one allowed spectators; moreover, the ones fighting were undoubtedly experts!

In the span of a few short minutes, everyone inside had run out. Only Suo Jia, Nicole, and Roger remained blankly sitting in place.

After a long while, Suo Jia tentatively asked, "Hey, do you guys think that 'blade master' could be Xiang Yun? Didn't he always call himself something like that...oh! He called himself the descendant of the western blade master?"

Roger and Nicole were stunned for a moment. Then, the three of them exchanged glances at each other and instantly stood up with a bang as if the seats had burned them, and bounded out the door. No wonder Xiang Yun, who was typically always punctual, was so late...he had been blocked off! So unlucky...

The city entrance was a bit far from the inn. The three of them followed the road, frantically running as fast as possible. However, in terms of speed, Nicole was the fastest, Roger was second, and Suo Jia was the slowest. Thus...although Suo Jia was running with all his might, Nicole and Roger didn't seem to be expending much energy at all!

While they were running, Nicole voiced in confusion, "Exactly what kind of mess did Xiang Yun get himself into to get surrounded by ten of Illusion City's troops? I mean...among those troops, there are definitely thieves, adventurers, mercenaries, and

knights....how could a single person have possibly provoked so many groups at once? In such a situation, he could only be described as someone that could infuriate the heavens and all men under it!”

Roger let out a bitter chuckle. “I have a general idea of what he did but...he’s way too brazen—to think he’d actually dare to do something of this level!”

“Hm?” Nicole shot Roger a suspicious glance. “Roger! You’d better give me a straight answer...what exactly have you been doing this past half a year? And what is Xiang Yun up to? Hurry up and say!”

Roger shook his head dryly. “You guys know that I do mercenary work, right? So...any time I run into a thief group, I challenge them. As for Xiang Yun...”

“Heavens!” Before Roger had even finished, Suo Jia and Nicole had realized what was going on; there was no way they couldn’t. They exchanged glances and Nicole asked in horror, “Xiang Yun... couldn’t have challenged every single group he’d encountered, right?”

Roger could only weakly reply, “Aside from that, what other possible explanation could there be?”

“That’s...” Nicole hesitated for a moment before replying, “That’s right...there’s no other possible reason for ten troops to attack him at once. It looks like that rascal has been playing around too much!”

Chapter 384 – Pre-Battle Analysis Pt. 1

“Hmph!” Roger let out a cold snort. “It’s not that extreme, at least, I don’t think it is. You guys have to realize that the maniac killer alone has kept so many groups stuck in this place, and that’s the person we have to defeat. If we aren’t even able to ignore these troops, how could we possibly have the ability to go against the homicidal maniac?”

Suo Jia froze. Indeed...Suo Jia had been trying his hardest to hold himself back and be extremely careful to not initiate fights. However, he felt that Roger’s words just now were reasonable. If he always worried about this and that, how could he possibly go up against the crazy killer?

Roger continued, “In the past, I was always worried about my self-cultivation...no matter how hard I tried, I could never stay calm-minded. So in the end, I decided to just give up on that and just went along with my natural personality; I’ll show anyone that tries to provoke me who they’re dealing with, hmph!”

Suo Jia sighed in admiration, “You’re completely right, Roger. There are many different types of mindsets, and your personality is more explosive; a single spark is enough to set you off. In that case, trying to cultivate your mind to being as calm as water would just be forcing things. Your current mindset fits well—making sure nobody provokes you and completely obliterating anyone that dares to infuriate you!”

“Yes, yes, that’s it!” Roger excitedly replied. “That’s exactly what I mean. I’m horrible at keeping my temper; anyone that tries to mess with me will definitely meet their end. I might as well just do whatever makes me happy, even if it ends up having bad consequences. Even if I end up dying, I’m willing to accept that result without any regrets!”

“Huh!” Nicole coldly retorted, “Aren’t you being too wild? I’m

sure you're happy and all, but do you know how much you inconvenience the entire group like that?"

"Ah..." Roger stuttered, his face flushing red.

Suo Jia chuckled and cut in, "No, Nicole...Roger isn't in the wrong here, you are."

"Hah?" Nicole exclaimed in confusion, "What? I'm in the wrong? Isn't he the one that's wrong for doing whatever he wants? He'll stir up all kinds of trouble for us!"

"Haha..." Suo Jia shook his head. "Nicole, the group exists for everyone to rely on it. It's everyone's natural shelter, not a burden, and so you shouldn't bring the the team established by the two of us into your argument. Let me ask you this, are you bothered by situations that Roger incite?"

"Mmm..." Nicole thought about it for a bit. Her eyes lit up as she replied, "I understand! I finally understand now. You mean to say that a true group should be exactly like so!"

This time, Roger was the one confused. "What are you guys talking about? Why am I still lost?"

Suo Jia smiled and explained, "The team is actually a group of like-minded friends gathered together to help each other grow. They make up for each other's shortcomings and help deal with any troubles other group members face!"

Nicole apologized, "Sorry Roger, I take back what I said earlier. No matter what kind of troubles you stir up, I, Nicole, as well as the entire group, will always continue supporting you!"

"But..." Roger scratched his head and hesitantly asked, "In that case, I'll just keep drawing trouble to the group, and end up causing unnecessary worry!"

Nicole gave a slight smile, but it disappeared in a flash and was immediately replaced by furrowed brows as she said in a spiteful tone, "Oh right, Roger, I've offended someone recently, a really

formidable someone that I can't defeat. But he's sworn to kill me, and might bring people with him to come after me any moment now!"

"What?!" Roger suddenly exclaimed. His eyes turned red and he huffed, "Where is this bastard right now? We don't even need to wait for him and his party to come find us; as soon as we finish dealing with Xiang Yun's matter, I'll immediately go and destroy them. Those damn bastards dare to bully my teammate? They must be tired of living!"

Nicole was touched by Roger's words, and she said in a soft voice, "That's...that won't do, I feel bad for stirring up so much trouble and inconveniencing the entire group!"

Roger indignantly replied, "What are you saying! How is this bringing trouble? How is this an inconvenience? What are teammates for? For heaven's sake...it's the same as asking for a helping hand in battle!"

"Pfft..." Nicole couldn't help but burst out laughing. She gave Roger a level look and continued, "Why didn't you ask me why I offended this guy? Perhaps I'm in the wrong!"

"Huh?" Roger looked puzzled. "What is wrong with you today? It's not like I'm a judge or anything, why would I care who's right and who's wrong? In my opinion, anyone that bothers my teammate is in the wrong, I don't care about which side is more reasonable!"

Nicole laughed and replied, "Now do you truly understand what being in a team means? The group is something everyone can rely on, a natural shelter, not shackles that bring others down. That's the most essential part of a team!"

Roger gaped dumbly for a while, having finally understood. He gave a dry chuckle and shook his head, "You brat, even if that did help me understand, you didn't have to use that kind of example did you? And here I thought that someone was actually trying to

kill you.”

Nicole tilted her head and smirked, “Although there are indeed other ways I could’ve made you understand, this was the most direct and most effective method!”

Before Roger could argue back, the three of them turned the corner and noticed the city gate before them. There were around two hundred people surrounding a tall figure there, and many corpses could be seen scattered around the area, soaking the ground in blood.

“Hurry!” The three of them immediately increased their speed, and instantly crossed the hundred meter distance to arrive at the gate.

Suo Jia suddenly spread his arms to stop Nicole and Roger from charging through the people and helping Xiang Yun. “Don’t be hasty, we’re not sure if Xiang Yun is really in any danger yet. Let’s watch how things go first; once we figure out exactly what is going on, we can make a decision. Moreover, us being on the outside is better; if we act together from both the inside and the outside, we’ll be able to break through the enemy’s circle!”

Nicole and Roger calmed down at Suo Jia’s words. If they rushed in to help Xiang Yun now, anyone would be able to tell they were part of the same group, and they’d be surrounded along with Xiang Yun!

Thus, the three of them mingled with the crowds. Nobody paid them any mind, thinking that they were also just there to watch the fun. Although Xiang Yun was technically part of Suo Jia’s merchant group, he didn’t wear any sort of symbol while he moved alone. After all, what right did someone from a merchant group have to ransack others?

After exchanging some covert glances with Xiang Yun, who was trapped in the middle of the enemy encirclement, the three of them climbed up to the top of the gate wall to survey the

battlefield. Meanwhile, Suo Jia covertly gestured at Xiang Yun to draw closer to the gate wall.

The reason they'd chosen to go up there was because of the high vantage point that was hard to attack. In addition, it was a place they could easily break the enemy formation. Although the wall had two faces—the outside and the inside—nobody would dare to attack in the direction of the city. It was forbidden to fight within Illusion City's borders; anyone that attempted to would be listed as wanted and would be fated to a surefire death.

When Xiang Yun noticed his companions arrive, he calmed down more and continuously surveyed his surroundings while comparing his battle prowess to the enemy's. He knew that once he entered the city, there was no way the opponents would dare to continue attacking. In other words, getting into the city was crucial in this battle. After all, there were too many enemies for him to go up against, especially since the terrain wasn't to his advantage. At this point, even escaping would be a pretty good achievement.

However, since those guys had dared to try to besiege him, Xiang Yun obviously wouldn't let the situation end as simply as running away. Since they had taken the initiative to attack him first, Xiang Yun had to teach them a good lesson. Otherwise, they'd believe that Xiang Yun was easy to bully!

Chapter 385 – Pre-Battle Analysis Pt. 2

Xiang Yun smiled mysteriously, and with the blade in his right hand raised in the air, he taunted, “Oi, bunch of cowards over there! I suggest you stop sending your weak men here to their deaths. Aren’t you guys part of the ten great troops? You captains should come out and exchange some blows with me! Where’s the heroism in sending your underlings to hell? Not afraid of being called heartless?”

Suo Jia couldn’t help but chuckle at Xiang Yun’s words. While in terms of strength, Roger wasn’t at all inferior to Xiang Yun, there was still a large gap in cunningness between the two of them. Suo Jia had no interest in Roger’s reckless actions that led to tactic-less battles; in fact, Suo Jia looked down on such fights the most.

Suo Jia’s philosophy was that victory in any battle was defined by the highest achievements at minimal expense. Going around fighting with just brute strength had no meaning, even if it resulted in a victory. How was such fighting any different from a magical beast’s actions?

In response to Xiang Yun’s provocation, a low voice rang out from amidst the enemy circle, “Blade Master! You’re being naive, did you really think we’d give you a chance to battle 1v1? Let me just tell you now, give up on trying to pull your little tricks. We have you surrounded right now, and none of us are foolish enough to pick a solo fight with you!”

“Tch...” Xiang Yun lazily leaned on his blade and said in disdain, “Stop trying to skirt around and just say the truth, you can’t beat me, right? As if I’d believe you’d refuse to 1v1 me if you could easily destroy me. This is such a good chance to show your power, even idiots wouldn’t let such an opportunity go to waste!”

“You’re right!” The low voice from before firmly answered. “I admit that if we fought 1v1, I wouldn’t be your match. However...

although I can't defeat you alone, you will definitely die here today!"

"Heavens!" Nicole sucked in sharply and murmured, "This guy's pretty smart. Not only did he resist Xiang Yun's provocation, he also managed to fire up his subordinates. He gained the advantage by declining, a really brilliant move. Now his subordinates won't be able to blame him for sending their brethren to their deaths!"

"Hmph!" Suo Jia snorted, "If you really think that, then you're wrong. Although both you and that guy are smart, you two are undoubtedly still far behind Xiang Yun in terms of cunningness. Neither of you truly understand the might of Xiang Yun's ability!"

"Hm?" Roger looked at Suo Jia in confusion and cut in, "Boss, I must ask, aren't you viewing Xiang Yun too highly? Didn't his attempt at leaving the enemy encirclement just fail?"

Suo Jia glanced at Roger. Thinking that this was a great chance to teach Roger and Nicole about williness, he explained carefully, "On the surface, the opponent seems to have foiled Xiang Yun's plan to escape. But in reality, he's just fallen further into Xiang Yun's trap!"

Suo Jia paused to look over at Xiang Yun in admiration. "Although the opponent managed to complicate Xiang Yun's escape plan, Xiang Yun also successfully implanted the image of being an undefeatable figure into the minds of every single member of those ten major troops. Once this fight ends, regardless of whether Xiang Yun wins or loses, his name would be carried by the wind and across the waters everywhere!"

Nicole and Roger suddenly understood, and immediately nodded in agreement. Seeing this, Suo Jia continued, "Moreover, now that he's ingrained the image of being undefeatable into the enemies' minds, they won't be able to attack him at full strength in battle later. Nobody would be able to utilize their full potential when they're sure they can't win!"

At this point, Suo Jia knit his brows together in thought, “Does this mean that Xiang Yun doesn’t want to escape, and wants to destroy everyone here instead? There’s no other possible explanation for his actions!”

Suo Jia looked at Xiang Yun’s figure and contemplated for a long while. There were still many ambiguous points that Suo Jia hadn’t figured out yet. Xiang Yun must have had a reason for acting in such a way but...while killing all of these people wasn’t impossible, there was absolutely no need to do so!

After pondering it for a long while, Suo Jia’s eyes lit up in realization and he triumphantly declared, “I understand now why Xiang Yun is doing all this. Along with setting up the image of being an undefeatable overlord, he’s also establishing the image of an eternal-reigning tyrant rivaling the homicidal maniac. That way, when we go and challenge the crazy killer, he can use his fame to rally supporters to gather with us and alleviate our group’s burden!

“Heavens!” Roger held his head in his hands and shook his head as he chuckled dryly, “There’s no way it’s that complicated, right? Isn’t this just a single battle? Is there any need to think that far? Don’t you guys find that tiring?”

Suo Jia glanced at Roger and placidly replied, “You just don’t understand. Yes, thinking that hard is tiring, but what isn’t? Utilizing intelligence gives people a feeling of satisfaction and pride. Maybe you should try using it sometime in the future, then you’ll be able to understand the amazing feeling it gives!”

Suo Jia took a deep breath and resolutely declared, “I’ve already gotten a general idea of what Xiang Yun means to do. The two of you should prepare yourselves; if Xiang Yun is really planning what I think he is, he will absolutely not run away, even if he doesn’t manage to kill all the enemies. The only ones that could possibly flee are the enemy!”

“What?!” Nicole stared at Suo Jia in shock. She pointed a shaking figure at the hundreds of soldiers around the city gate and asked in disbelief, “Are you saying that our group alone will withstand those ten great troops? That’s impossible!”

Roger urgently nodded in agreement, “Yeah, that’s right! Just being to escape from such a situation is worth bragging about, killing them all or chasing them away is an unaccomplishable task!”

Suo Jia coldly replied, “If we can’t even do something as minor as this, how could we possibly challenge the homicidal maniac? That guy alone was able to easily eliminate ten times more people than this!”

Nicole and Roger inhaled sharply at this. Suo Jia continued, “This is a test. Like I said, if we can’t defeat the maniac killer this time around, we’ll just die together there! Therefore, victory isn’t an issue to be discussed for this battle, because that must be the conclusion!”

With this, Nicole and Roger finally understood everything. Suo Jia and Xiang Yun had already steeled their resolve to win this fight. If they couldn’t even deal with this situation, there was no way they could even think about challenging the crazy killer. Unswerving determination could be seen on the faces of Nicole and Roger; there was no way they would retreat anymore. The only thing to consider now was how they would achieve victory!

Seeing that his companions had regained their optimal mentality, Suo Jia chuckled, “Don’t worry too much, you guys have to be confident in yourselves. Trust me, this actually isn’t that hard to win. Besides, as long as we show our true strength, we won’t have any regrets even if we do lose!”

“Mhm,” Nicole and Roger simultaneously replied. “We understand, Boss. Now, what are your orders? What should we do?”

Suo Jia smirked and shook his head. “The best team doesn’t need instructions on how to act, but rather work together in tandem naturally. That’s why, I won’t plan anything for this fight. You two can set out now and go to positions you think are most ideal. We will use the methods we are each most expert in to help lead the entire group to victory!”

“What?!” Nicole exclaimed in shock. “But if we leave, who will protect you? A mage can’t possibly display their entire strength without a warrior’s protection!”

Suo Jia puffed out his chest and proudly answered, “Although there is logic in your words, I’m not any normal mage. I’ve trained for so long that I’m no longer afraid of close combat. Actually, that’s the kind of battle I prefer!”

Suo Jia lowered his head to look at his outstretched hands, “I’ll let you all witness today the combined power of the control fruit and ice elemental magic, and how astonishingly amazing it is. Believe me, you guys won’t be disappointed!”

Nicole and Roger exchanged glances before nodding in unison. Roger then replied, “In that case, we’ll head down. Hehe...it looks I can fight as much as I want this time!” With that, Roger leapt down from the tall city gate wall and instantly merged into the crowd.

Now that he’d left, only Nicole and Suo Jia remained on top of the gate wall. Nicole looked at Suo Jia in concern and said in a trembling voice, “You...you make sure to watch out for yourself now!” With that, Nicole blushed and swiftly jumped off. As Suo Jia watched her disappear, he couldn’t help but wonder what exactly was wrong with her. Why was she blushing at such a minor thing?

Chapter 386 – Diamond Dragon’s Explosive Strength Pt. 1

When Xiang Yun noticed Roger and Nicole merging with the crowd, he suddenly lifted the blade in his right hand and threw his head back to arrogantly laugh out, “Oi! You guys don’t really just plan on trapping me here forever right? If so, then I’ll just have to break through!” Xiang Yun bent his knees slightly, prepared to charge out.

In response, a deep voice suddenly roared out from amidst the crowd, “Everyone, attack! Don’t let him escape!”

Without caring about who had said these words and feeling more courageous with a crowd, everyone raised their weapons and boldly rushed towards Xiang Yun.

“Hehe...” Despite the large number of enemies charging at him, Xiang Yun didn’t panic; rather, he chuckled to himself instead. The next moment, Xiang Yun slowly reached to grab the hilt of a blade on his back. He drew the long blade and held it up horizontally in front of his chest.

“Endless Massacre: Spinning Blade!” Following Xiang Yun’s loud roar, his body quickly swerved and began to spin furiously like a tornado. At the same time, the rust-covered Chasm Moon blade began to glow an eerie yellow color!

Fierce clashing sounds could be heard as Xiang Yun slashed through the enemy crowd left and right like a hurricane. He advanced easily as if there was nobody there. Enemies on the stronger side were forced to stagger back from the centripetal force of Xiang Yun’s attack, while enemies on the weaker side were directly cleaved in half!

The battle immediately turned into a chaotic disarray. Although the enemy was far greater in number, they had absolutely no form

of organization amongst themselves and were therefore unable to work together well; it was so bad that they were actually blocking each other from advancing! This was a mix of ten different troops, they lacked communication and mutual connection. Thus, despite having many people, they were unable to exert any form of dominance!

Suo Jia nodded to himself, pleased by the situation. The shout just now had actually come from Roger. Who would've guessed that the simple-minded Roger could learn how to stir up disorder so quickly! It was progress, he was definitely a great prospect for the team!

When Suo Jia studied the battle situation below him more closely, he immediately located Roger, who had secretly infiltrated the crowd and killed off a few of the weaker warriors. That guy was really contemptible; he didn't even touch the stronger ones, and instead chose to beat up the easy targets. Still, it was amazing how skillfully he could pick out every weak enemy he encountered!

Just then, Roger suddenly bent his knees, his palms against the ground. He first did a full spin kick to push away the person next to him, and then his arms suddenly straightened up against the ground as his legs split in the air and spun around like a windmill, causing a terrifying scene unfolded!

Although his opponent had Life Protection, Roger's attack was just so fast; with his hands on the ground and his legs split parallel to the ground, he managed to spin wildly three times; within a split second, his opponent had been struck by three heavy blows! The first two blows broke his Life Protection, while the third landed directly on the completely exposed enemy!

This was a direct blow! With the shattering effect Roger's combat boots had, any person struck by Roger would end up with their bones smashed and their body torn to shreds. Scarlet blood instantly dyed Roger's legs and feet. Roger's nickname "Red-footed Roger" was definitely well-deserved!

After getting rid of several enemies next to him, Roger rolled forwards before standing up and spinning a hurricane-like kick towards the enemies in front of him. Before they had even turned around and figured out what was coming at them, they collapsed miserably to the ground with dull thuds.

The enemy wasn't comprised of idiots; immediately after noticing Roger's abnormal movements, a burly warrior shouted, "Everyone, watch their backs. That guy..."

Before he could finish his sentence, a bright glow flashed before his eyes. When he tried to continue shouting, he could only futilely open his mouth, unable to make a sound. Instead, fresh blood violently spurt out from his throat. Like this, he crumpled to the ground, silenced for eternity.

Instant kill! It was a one-sided instant kill! Although the enemies were much greater in number, there was no single person among them that was a match to Xiang Yun, Roger, or Nicole. While Xiang Yun drew their attention, Roger would strike from behind and Nicole would stealthily attack. It was an unavoidable massacre.

Of course, that wasn't to say stronger people didn't exist on the Greater Trade Routes. It was precisely due to that crazy killer that all the more powerful people had already broken through the homicidal maniac's blockade and gone through the third checkpoint, while those with strength slightly above average had died by the crazy killer's hands. Thus, there were no experts left here [at the second checkpoint].

Basically, the dozen or so groups that had successfully gotten past the homicidal maniac and reached the third checkpoint during the past two years were all stronger than Suo Jia's group. Even the ones that had died tragically by the crazy killer were either pretty close in level or stronger than Suo Jia and his group. However, it didn't seem like there were any such figures among the ten large troops here at the moment.

True experts grew stronger upon encountering strong enemies, and easily eliminated any weaker opponents along the way. The path Suo Jia and his companions needed to continue on was long. Even if Suo Jia became a Mage Saint, he'd only be at the next starting point; it was only after that that he'd be able to start his long journey to become an expert!

After watching the chaotic battlefield below him for a while, Suo Jia smirked and stretched out his right hand and gripped the empty air in front of him. With a brilliant myriad of colors, Ocean's Soul appeared in his grip.

While the Sea God's Trident's name stemmed from the fact that it belong to the renowned God of the Sea, Poseidon, this wasn't the weapon's original name. The Sea God himself had given it a different name while it was in his possession which it naturally went by now in Suo Jia's hand: Ocean's Soul! After all, it wasn't like Suo Jia was a [sea] god.

Facing the direction of battle, Suo Jia raised Ocean's Soul high up in the air. A blue light surged outwards and Hailstone Technique was immediately activated at full force!

The Hailstone Technique's attack range was originally a circle with a 40-meter diameter. But in the past year, Suo Jia's Exhaustion Training Method had doubled his strength, therefore raising his Hailstone Technique by a level. Its attack range had expanded to anything within a 60 meter diameter. This was pretty much the highest a human could achieve; any increase in level would only boost the attack power, not its range!

However, Suo Jia's Divine Artifact, Sea God's Trident, also doubled the attack range of all magic. In other words, his Hailstone Technique now spanned across a 120 meter diameter. In addition, the hail was also denser and therefore more destructive; the speed of the spell also increased. The temperature of the hail also lowered in temperature, as did the amount of freezing air each hailstone carried.

Although all these improvements still couldn't immediately kill a person, any victim would undoubtedly die if they didn't escape from the attack perimeter quickly. The strength of a mage lay in their immense firepower!

As long as a mage could fire attacks from a distance, even a warrior of equal power at close range would not be able to withstand the attack. The instant Suo Jia made his move was a critical point to determine victory in battle. If Suo Jia's spell wasn't immediately dispelled, even the ten troops combined would definitely fall!

As the azure light surged outwards, dense, black clouds swiftly began to gather in the air above the battleground. A heavy, chilly air seemed to press down on the people below as they could sense the magic enveloping them. Suo Jia shut his eyes as sparkling tears of excitement fell from his eyes. So this was the power of a Divine Artifact?

Even a Mage Deity's Fire Meteor Shower could only span across 150 meters. But with the Ocean's Soul boosting his magic, Suo Jia's attack range covered nearly as much as a fire magic's wide range!

What was the extent of an area 120 meters in diameter? It was around the size of a small soccer field. If ice magic with the effect to slow movements covered this large of a space, it would be no simple feat to escape it.

It was at that moment Suo Jia finally understood the terror of Divine Artifacts. The reason they were so much stronger than Epic ranked equipment was because Epic ranked equipment was restricted by human limits while Divine Artifacts were able to double one's strength regardless of their current level. Suo Jia's limits had fused with his weapon's limits, expanding the limits of his attacks!

Everything in the world had its limitations, but the average person wouldn't ever reach that point. Superior tier warriors were

probably the people closest to reaching the maximum limits for a human. However, Divine Artifacts could go against the gods, and could forcibly extend human boundaries by at least twofold! This was the true power of a Divine Artifact.

In most situations, Divine Artifacts weren't as useful as a Legendary equipment set. But once a person's strength reached a certain level, it's clear that even with [the more superior] Epic-ranked equipment set, it was impossible for their attacks to go beyond human boundaries. If one's attack had a 150 meter attack range, their attack range would still be 150 meters even with Epic ranked equipment. But with a Divine Artifact that could break through limitations, their attack range would increase to 300 meters!

If the best humanly feasible performance was to cover a hundred meters in eight seconds, the Divine Artifact would be able to shorten it to a hundred meters in four seconds. This was the difference between humans and gods! This also showed the gap between Epic ranked equipment and Divine Artifacts!

Upon feeling the great amount of energy in the air above, every member of the ten troops on the battleground instinctively looked upwards at the sky. Countless flashes of blue light lit up the dense, black clouds, and as the flashes grew brighter, they also started descending closer to the ground!

Finally, someone with sharper eyesight shouted in panic, "That doesn't look good! It's Hailstone magic!"

Chapter 387 – Diamond Dragon’s Explosive Strength Pt. 2

Everyone present was stunned at this, and immediately began searching their surroundings. Magic was something that attacked friend and foe alike; as long as one was within the attack range, one would be viciously attacked! Thus, for their own sake, everyone had to find the mage and immediately attack him to break his magic no matter who it was. Otherwise, everybody would die!

They swiftly found their target. Suo Jia stood on top of the tall city wall, his body covered by a large grey cloak emitting a distinct aura. He raised his right hand, causing the azure trident to float high up in the air. Above each of the trident’s points were balls of blue energy; the light emitted from the two trident ends connected to form a ring, while the light emitted from the middle point had condensed together in the form of a thick beam of light that stretched upwards straight into the center of the black cloud mass!

As everyone noticed this, strong winds began to gather before the city wall, causing Suo Jia’s cloak to billow so furiously that it seemed as if he would be blown upwards at any moment!

Xiang Yun couldn’t help but chuckle wryly at Suo Jia’s god-like appearance atop the wall and the sight of the furious storm of Ice Arrows pouring down from the skies. He shook his head and murmured to himself, “That rascal has become even more ridiculously powerful after only half a year!”

At this exact moment, Roger, who had just sent an explosive kick at an enemy in front of him, looked up at the sky and shouted, “Damn, as expected of Boss, he’s definitely very powerful. But isn’t he attacking us as well?”

Only Nicole thought differently. Suo Jia had always been the most mysterious to her, an omnipotent figure. Even if Suo Jia

displayed even more power, she would not be surprised. In her eyes, he was always that formidable; there was nobody else mightier than him—even the homicidal maniac was no exception.

Upon noticing Suo Jia's figure, everyone immediately abandoned Xiang Yun and started charging towards Suo Jia instead. If Suo Jia's attack continued, he'd easily blast away everybody present. That was the true power of a mage!

Suo Jia couldn't help but take pity on the crowd of people rushing towards him. When they neared the wall, he coldly commanded, "Diamond Dragon, it's about time you do something; you've been resting for so long!"

At this, a small head poked out from behind Suo Jia's cloak around the chest area. It gave a quick glance down at the people running towards them before its blue figure flew into the sky above!

After a year of cultivating, the Diamond Dragon had already processed two rank 10 Giant Icebear King monster cores. Although its strength hadn't been able to go up in level, it had still made a decent amount of progress. At the very least, the Diamond Dragon at its current state was much harder to cut; its defense was absolute!

The small Diamond Dragon stretched its limbs open in midair with its wings flapping up and down. At the same time, many layers of Glacial Armor began to cover its body.

"Roar!" With a heaven-shaking cry, the Diamond Dragon's body grew to a height of nine meters. It landed heavily on the ground in front of Suo Jia with a bang, completely blocking off the paths of the incoming crowds!

As they neared, the Diamond Dragon opened its jaws and slowly began to lift its right foot. With a heavy stomp on the ground, the true Diamond Charge was instantly activated!

Suo Jia could also use Diamond Charge; his was based on the Frost Wyrms King's innately produced Diamond Charge, so his dragon's current level of attack couldn't be compared to it. At the moment, it was probably more appropriate to call his Diamond Dragon's attack 'Frost Wyrms Charge'.

The Diamond Dragon's stomp immediately caused millions of ice shards to fly at the approaching enemy. Although these ice shards weren't large—roughly the same size as a finger—they were great in number, allowing them to cover a wider range. In fact, they completely filled the air within ten feet of the Diamond Dragon, covering 180 degrees!

If the Suo Jia's Diamond Charge was said to be a heavy machine gun, the Diamond Dragon's would be like a shotgun. Although the ice shards were small, this gave it the advantage in number and area. It also had a stronger impact force, immediately sending all the enemies standing before the Diamond Dragon flying backwards, as if they had been shot by an actual bullet. By the time they were able to plant their feet on the ground again, their bodies had already been covered in ice shards and frost, effectively freezing them.

The Diamond Dragon looked down at the enemy in disdain. It stretched out its right arm and a rush of blue light immediately formed. This light quickly condensed together and froze into a ball of ice!

This was precisely the Ice Sphere Technique! Just like a human, the Diamond Dragon was able to gain deeper understanding of ice magic as time passed, and the Ice Sphere Technique was the first spell it could learn!

However, if Suo Jia activated this spell, his Ice Sphere would only be around the size of a basketball. On the other hand, the 9 meter tall Diamond Dragon with its enormous talons that were even larger than a bed, could form Ice Spheres that spanned two meters in diameter! Relatively speaking, this size was proportional

to the Diamond Dragon's body size the same way a basketball would be to a human's body size.

After roughly 3 seconds had passed, the Diamond Dragon successfully finished forming the Ice Sphere. It extended its wings, and then pulled its right arm back. With a forceful throw, the Ice Sphere whizzed forwards through the air at full force.

“Bang!” With a booming smash, the enormous Ice Sphere heavily slammed into the ground. Three enemies that hadn't gotten the chance to dodge were instantly blasted to smithereens. Due to its momentum, the Ice Sphere began to rapidly roll forwards; with the large amount of strength the Diamond Dragon had hurled it with, the Ice Sphere easily carved a several meter wide path through!

“Mother of—!” Roger couldn't help but curse at the sight. He immediately jumped up into the air. As he looked down at the berserk Ice Sphere, he shouted, “You bastard, look at who you're aiming at before you smash them! Are you trying to kill me too?”

In response to Roger's angry shout, the Diamond Dragon—which by now had a high level of intelligence—couldn't help but scratch its head awkwardly, as if embarrassed.

When he saw this adorable action, Roger's anger immediately faded. Besides, he knew that while this kind of attack was hard to dodge at close range, he had been further away. Only slow dumbasses wouldn't be able to dodge at that distance.

Actually, Roger wasn't the only one—everyone that had been some distance away had successfully jumped to evade the Ice Sphere. Although it was a powerful spell, it was still only a beginner's battle skill. Moreover, the Diamond Dragon had only just learned it, so its might was not as great as expected.

Although the enemy had gone quiet at the initial appearance of the extremely gigantic Diamond Dragon, they soon recovered their senses. Brandishing their weapons, everybody began to charge

towards the Diamond Dragon this time. If they couldn't intercept Suo Jia soon, the Ice Arrows filling the heavens would not have any mercy!

Chapter 388 – Passing Another Checkpoint

Pt. 1

However, the Diamond Dragon had successfully delayed the enemy onslaught. By this point, the Ice Arrows had begun to descend. They furiously whizzed through the air from the heavens, slowly but continuously chipping away at the enemy's Life Protections. At this rate, none of them would be able to escape; all of them would die here!

The ten troop commanders could no longer hold themselves back after witnessing this moment. Although they clearly knew they were not the Diamond Dragon's opponent, it wasn't like continuing to hide in the back would give them a higher chance of survival!

The next moment....ten exceptionally robust figures brandishing their weapons leapt out from the crowds, charging at full speed towards the Diamond Dragon.

The Diamond Dragon couldn't help but feel a burst of anger at this offensive sight; to think that there were actually humans that dared to try destroying its face! With an indignant stomp of its right foot, the Diamond Dragon once again blasted a Diamond Charge, this time straight at the approaching commanders.

Seeing the incoming attack, the enemy leaders jumped into the air and raised their large swords above their heads before swinging down with great force to counter the Diamond Charge attack. Brilliant flashes of light filled the air for a moment as ten cracks split the powerful Diamond Charge. At the same time, the commanders used the rebound force of their attack to fly upwards in attempt to pass through the Diamond Dragon and directly interrupt Suo Jia's magic activation!

The Diamond Dragon only grew more furious when it recognized their attempt to flip over it. At this point, it could no longer stop

their advance. Although the Diamond Dragon could also jump up and intercept the enemy, the Diamond Dragon was nine meters tall; shifting its cumbersome body from stillness to motion would take too long. The exchange of blows had happened too quickly for it to react in time!

When Suo Jia saw the Diamond Dragon's upset expression, he shouted, "Diamond Dragon, don't pay any mind to those guys. As long as you can hold everyone else back, that's good enough. I'll deal with these guys!"

The dragon immediately turned its back on the troop leaders and instead began to release its anger onto the three hundred others before it. Two enormous Ice Spheres swiftly began to form in the air above its raised talons.

"My god!" The people closest to the dragon couldn't help but exclaim in horror as they turned around, scrambling to flee. At such close range, and with everyone so crowded together, these Ice Spheres were impossible to dodge. They'd only be able to evade the Diamond Dragon's attack if they got further away!

While everyone else was frantically running away, Roger, Xiang Yun, and Nicole simultaneously stopped fighting and gathered together to watch Suo Jia in excitement. While they had always known Suo Jia had been studying close combat techniques, they didn't know much about his true ability at close range.

Now that these ten commanders had managed to approach and surround Suo Jia, his companions could finally get a close look of Suo Jia's close combat skills! A leader of any group had to be either a mage or a warrior. It looked like the ten troop leaders present happened to all be warriors; moreover, all four elements — earth, water, fire, and wind — were all included. If Suo Jia couldn't defeat them now, his entire group wouldn't have any more future to speak of.

By this point, the commanders had already landed on the city

wall. Waving their weapons in the air, they began to run towards Suo Jia. In response, Suo Jia eyed them coldly. With Ocean's Soul still in his right hand, he continued to maintain the Hailstone Technique while he reached out with his left hand, causing a faint flickering shadow of a shield to appear for a brief second before disappearing once more!

"Heavens!" Nicole, who knew Suo Jia the best among them, cried out in surprise, "That's the Young Master's Space Shield from his third generation interspatial ring!"

"Space Shield?" Xiang Yun asked in confusion.

"Yes..." Nicole nodded excitedly and quickly replied, "That's right. This is the only interspatial ring in the world forged by a Superior grade interspatial gem; it contains a Space Shield that provides absolute protection for three seconds! Hehe...no matter how many people there are or what kinds of attacks they use, there's no way anyone could break through that defense for three whole seconds!"

"Three seconds of absolute protection?" Xiang Yun stuttered in shock, "How...how is that possible?! How can such a thing exist in this world? If it's invincible for three whole seconds, what's the point of fighting? That's enough time for him to activate three Ice Roars!"

"No!" Nicole replied as she shook her head. "Three seconds of absolute protection is just the interspatial ring's original ability. Young Master can also use his own spirit power to extend the time he is protected for! According to historical records, the longest someone has ever been able to maintain that for is 20 seconds!"

At this moment, the troop leaders had just finished closing in on Suo Jia and were swinging their weapons down at him. The others watched the strange sight from below; while the enemy commanders were frantically swinging their giant weapons at Suo Jia, the weapons would suddenly disappear from sight one meter

away from him, only to reappear once outside that protective range again!

Nicole laughed, “You see that? Under the Space Shield’s protection, Suo Jia basically becomes isolated from the rest of the world. Any attack, no matter how powerful, will be dragged into another realm, keeping it away from harming Suo Jia in this realm. Thus, Suo Jia is invincible while under its protection!”

Xiang Yun broke out into a cold sweat. He furiously shook his head and murmured to himself, “That’s overpowered, way too overpowered! What in the world...is this even a fight?”

“Wha–! Hah! Argh!” Meanwhile, the sky filled with Ice Arrows finally let loose. Any of the weaker enemies immediately fell dead to the ground, and there was no indication of the storm of Ice Arrows letting up!

1, 2, 3 seconds...

As time passed, the commanders’ faces turned ashen. After watching their subordinates die one after another and seeing their own attacks failing, they finally began to give up! After all, they had no idea how long Suo Jia could maintain his defense for.

The ten of them exchanged mutual glances of understand with each other, and they suddenly all retreated and sheathed their weapons. One of the middle-aged men shouted, “Stop fighting, we concede!”

“Oh?” Suo Jia coldly glared at them and replied, “You concede? Perfect, in that case, just close your eyes and wait for your deaths!”

The enemy couldn’t help but sharply inhale in shock. Only now did they truly realize that if Xiang Yun was so wild, there was no doubt this guy with the group leader emblem would be even crazier!

After watching a few more of their men die, the same middle-aged commander from before desperately shouted out once more,

“Stop! Hurry up and stop! No matter how you want to punish us, even if that means destroying us all, stop first and let’s talk it out. Unless...don’t tell me that even with your strength, you’re afraid of us running away?”

Suo Jia didn’t bat an eyelid. “I’m sorry, but the one you messed with was my brother so I don’t have the right to forgive you. Unless....” Suo Jia stopped mid-sentence, but the implication was already very clear.

The troop leader immediately turned around to look over at Xiang Yun and pleaded, “I beg of you, please just let us go this once. What we did before was wrong; if we ever see you again in the future we will definitely go the opposite way!”

Xiang Yun laughed dryly at this and gestured at Suo Jia to stop. Seeing this, Suo Jia calmly lowered Ocean’s Soul, immediately resulting in the clouds masses slowly dispersing.

Xiang Yun slowly strode through the crowd and jumped onto the city wall. He looked at Suo Jia in admiration before turning around to tell the troop leader, “The reason I let you all go was simply because you and our boss are the same; you’re both willing to sacrifice everything for the sake of your teammates!”

Xiang Yun then laughed, “As for who was right and who was wrong, that isn’t something anyone can truly determine. Neither of us were “wrong”, we were just both trying our best to achieve our goals. But I’ll warn you, you guys were lucky that the one you provoked this time was me. If it had been my boss, there’s no way any of you would even be able to dream of leaving here alive!”

Xiang Yun glanced around at the ten leaders and coldly laughed out in a low voice, “We’ll wholeheartedly welcome you all if you want to take revenge on us later. But next time, we won’t let you go!” Xiang Yun turned to regroup with Suo Jia, Nicole, and Roger, and all of them began to walk back into the city.

Before they’d gotten very far, Xiang Yun abruptly stopped in his

tracks and loudly declared, “That’s right, if all goes as planned, we’re going to be challenging that crazy killer. If you guys want to take revenge on us, it’s better to do it earlier, since you won’t get the chance to later!”

The ten troop leaders’ faces turned ashen. Nicole and Roger were even more shocked. They exchanged glances with each other and then looked at Suo Jia, giving him a subtle thumbs-up. While a bit slow on the uptake, they finally realized that Suo Jia’s seemingly ridiculous reasoning before was actually true!

Chapter 389 – Passing Another Checkpoint

Pt. 2

Upon returning to the inn, the four companions returned to their own rooms to begin self-training, pouring all their energy into completely absorbing the results of their past training. This was all in preparation to pass through yet another checkpoint next week.

A week later, they finally left their own rooms. When Suo Jia looked around at his companions, he couldn't tell that after a week of cultivating themselves and absorbing their learnings, they had all made progress—especially in terms of their spirit and temperament. It was as if they had completely transformed!

Suo Jia's temperament had grown more steady. Although he had just turned eighteen, his calm and stable air was the same level as an eighty-year-old sage's. There was no room for sparks or flames in him; he seemed as if he would remain unmoved no matter what.

Xiang Yun seemed to have grown more profound. His expression was serene yet powerful, and with the seven blades he carried on his back, he walked with a dignified air. Without even doing anything, anyone could tell at a single glance that he was not someone that could be messed with.

Roger was still like a barrel of gunpowder; the corner of his mouth slightly raised as his provoking eyes constantly scanned his surroundings. If anyone dared to challenge him, he would definitely jump straight into a frenzied battle without hesitation.

Nicole had reached the point where, although she was clearly in one spot, anyone trying to get a closer look at her would see only a blur, giving anyone a hard time locating her. It was as if one was looking at an intangible mirage.

After making the appropriate preparations, Suo Jia's group left the inn. Suo Jia and Xiang Yun had expected that since a week had

already passed since they had made their announcement, all the people that were stuck here and desperate to pass through the third checkpoint would be crowding the city area, prepared to head out with their party. However, when they walked out of the inn, all they encountered was a completely dead street, without a single person's trace to be found.

Suo Jia froze in astonishment and scanned their surroundings, shaking his head in confusion. He then immediately led his group out of Illusion City, straight towards Green Forest Canyon. It didn't really matter if the other adventurers joined, their presence didn't determine the result of the fight anyways!

Suo Jia's party didn't worry too much on their way there; rather, from beginning to end, they kept their mental state calm to keep themselves at their peak states. Thus, after a week of traveling with their newly found vigor, they arrived back at Green Forest Canyon with unprecedented grandeur.

Suo Jia turned around to face the others and said, "I don't think I need to say much regarding today's battle; we'll all split up by ourselves and then later join back to work together as a team. No matter what happens, it can only result in one of two ways: either our entire group is wiped out, or we eradicate the homicidal maniac!" Suo Jia then turned and raced ahead first. The fight was officially starting!

As soon as they turned around the corner, the Green Forest Canyon appeared within sight. The large open space right before it was currently packed with people; at closer glance, one could tell that there were over 3000 adventurers all crammed in the space, seemingly waiting for something!

Suo Jia grinned and shook his head at the sight, and then directly leapt over the crowds to rush straight into the canyon. At the same time, Roger and Xiang Yun each flew out, flanking him on both sides...

The three of them disappeared again as soon as they appeared, but those short few seconds were enough for everyone to notice their presence. When the 3000 adventurers saw those three figures rush through strongly like the wind, they couldn't help but feel excited, and immediately start pouring into the canyon in pursuit.

Suo Jia stopped on top of a tree with a proud smirk on his face. The true reason they had invited everyone along wasn't to help their fight, but to draw the crazy killer out to this specific location!

Jumping down from the tree and over everyone else's heads, he continued to lead the other adventurers racing through the canyon.

Soon, they arrived at the battlefield where they had previously encountered the crazy killer. At this moment, Suo Jia stealthily concealed himself, silently waiting for the homicidal maniac to appear.

"Ah! Ugh..." As expected, as soon as the adventurers all arrived at the location, miserable cries began to ring through the air. Hidden on top of a large tree, Suo Jia noiselessly observed the scene. With great concentration, he finally managed to lock onto that slim, elf-like green figure!

The slim figure's movements were beyond nimble, darting and weaving around the trees as fast as a bullet by rebounding off of the tree trunks. This boosted their speed to a point where they couldn't be caught!

"Fwoosh..." The figure managed to cross a distance of over 40 meters in a single second by pushing off 4 tree trunks along the way. As they sped through the forest, their hands continued to dance around in the air, and each movement resulted in one of the adventurers' deaths!

Although theoretically, an archer should be able to shoot down anyone no matter their speed, this figure's movement patterns were too strange to follow. It seemed that with some kind of thread

they were shooting out from their hands, they were able to instantly change their trajectory at any moment, seemingly disobeying the laws of physics!

After watching the green silhouette reap the lives of over a dozen people and then disappear into the dense foliage of the forest, Suo Jia's expression hardened. With such fast and unpredictable movements, even large scale magic would be ineffective!

“Where do you think you're running off to?!” Just then, an extremely familiar voice shouted out from below him. Suo Jia watched as Roger stood before the homicidal maniac, cutting off their path and immediately initiating a fierce battle!

This had been a careless mistake on the crazy killer's part; having assumed that Roger hadn't changed from half a year ago, the killer had tried to stealthily jump down behind Roger for a backstab. But he hadn't imagined that half a year later, Roger was no longer the same as he was before!

Without even turning around to face the attack approaching to stab him from behind, Roger leaned forward, his left leg still on the ground as his right leg swept around like a pendulum, and swung downwards to send an explosive kick towards the killer's chest.

The homicidal maniac couldn't help but be taken aback by Roger's instant reflexes. Since Roger's center of gravity was currently shifted forwards, the attack would miss its target if it continued on its current trajectory. In addition, the killer would end up getting struck by Roger's counter!

The crazy killer was definitely not a god; if he took this kick, his bones would undoubtedly shatter. Roger could basically see the ending scene of flesh and blood filling the air.

However, the crazy killer was a homicidal maniac after all; if he could be killed off so easily, he wouldn't have survived up until now. Although initially taken aback, his mouth curved to form an

intrigued smirk as he suddenly pulled back his left hand that was not holding the blade...and his posture shifted unnaturally, suddenly changing directions from forwards to backwards, and therefore closely evading Roger's kick!

Although to any other person, this kick would seem lethal—an attack that over 80% of people would die from—this homicidal maniac was not only unafraid, but even smiling and gazing calmly at Roger, whose foot had been less than a centimeter away from him. There were no traces of panic coming from him at all!

As the kick swept through empty air, the crazy killer didn't continue retreating, nor was Roger intimidated by this result. His body followed the momentum of the kick and somersaulted forwards. The instant both his feet landed on the ground again, Roger immediately activated the power of his Hormone fruit. At the same time, the maniac killer activated an unknown battle skill; the thin blade in his hand instantly multiplied to form three blades that flew at Roger's throat, heart, and abdomen!

Suo Jia's eyes lit up at this sight. Based on both this and their previous encounter, he was starting to get an idea of what kind of person the crazy killer was. This guy clearly thought of himself highly; since the sneak attack had failed, and Roger had managed to almost decapitate him, he had grown infuriated. Rather than immediately leaving the area, he had instead chosen to first regain face!

But truthfully speaking, at this close range of two meters or so, even Xiang Yun might not be able to be Roger's opponent. This was especially true now that Roger had activated his Hormone fruit and become extremely powerful. At this point, Suo Jia could already anticipate the homicidal maniac suffering! If he could still completely overwhelm Roger like this, then there would be no point in continuing the battle, as that would basically make the crazy killer a god...

Just then, Roger and the homicidal maniac finally exchanged

attacks. A cruel smirk formed on Roger's face as he angled his body slightly so that the three blades missed his vitals...and as the blades pierced through his body, Roger sent three kicks flying at the killer in retaliation. With the Hormone fruits' effects, Roger's speed wasn't any slower than the opponent's. It was at this moment that one could truly see how powerful the Hormone fruits could be!

Chapter 390 – Finally Passing the Checkpoint Pt. 1

Everyone watched as blood began to blossom from right underneath Roger's throat, heart, and abdomen. Almost simultaneously, he bound over and fired three attacks in succession at the enemy: the first was an explosive kick at the homicidal maniac's sturdy green armor, the second kick shattering the opponent's thin blade, and the final kick targeting the enemy's now unprotected chest!

The crowds watched with their mouths agape. Would the crazy killer...be killed, just like that? That couldn't be! For some reason, everyone felt an uneasy sense of foreboding!

"Bzz!" Just as Roger's last kick landed on the homicidal maniac, a sharp buzz could be heard. Roger's foot suddenly froze in mid-air, only ten centimeters away from its target!

"It's a thread snare!" At that moment, Roger suddenly recalled his opponent's strange ability!

The crazy killer's eyes glinted provocatively at Roger before changing back to that pitying glance Roger knew all too well. The homicidal maniac's right hand reached behind the waist, immediately drawing out a green dagger...

In the current situation, there was no way Roger could dodge this attack. Based on the color of the dagger, it definitely carried some kind of deadly poison; a single cut would inflict unrecoverable damage, even if Suo Jia used Moisture Technique!

With this, everyone naturally assumed Roger would surely die at the crazy killer's hands. After all, so many-thousands even-of these instances had occurred to the point where such an end result was something they were all used to seeing now.

However, in the face of the crazy killer's provocative gaze that

Roger hadn't seen in a while, a smirk briefly flickered on Roger's face. His expression then hardened once more as he let out a frenzied cry!

In that same moment, the threads binding Roger's right foot emitted a series of snapping sounds. The homicidal maniac let out a short chuckle and while lunging at Roger with the green dagger drawn, he snorted in disdain, "My threads won't ever break, stop wasting your energy!"

As the dagger whizzed through the air, Roger laughed. His eyes flashed and with a burst of energy—in the instant the dagger was right about to pierce him—a wolf made of battle qi violently surged outwards!

"What!" The crazy killer cried out in shock as the golden head of the wolf instantly smashed into his chest...

"Bang! Bang! Bang...crash!" The force of the impact immediately sent the killer's body flying, breaking the trunks of three large trees before finally crashing into a giant tree and falling to the ground.

Blood spurted out uncontrollably from the homicidal maniac's mouth. He stared at Roger—who was now at least 30 meters away—in utter disbelief!

Roger proudly straightened his back, turned around, and used his left finger to point at the crazy killer while declaring, "I've finally repaid you for that blow you gave me last time! This move was created exclusively to defeat you, and what I've spent the past half a year painstakingly practicing!"

With much difficulty, the opposite party stood up from the ground and casually waved his hands, immediately dismembering a few dozen adventurers attempting to close in and attack him. He wiped away the blood at the corner of his mouth and said in a low voice, "That is a good move. What's it called?"

Roger loftily answered, “Since this move was created specifically to defeat you, its name is naturally related to you as well; its full name is Golden Wolf Killer Slayer!”

“Golden Wolf Killer Slayer?” The homicidal maniac murmured with a chuckle. “A nice name indeed. However, that move alone definitely isn’t enough to destroy me. Let’s see who will have the last laugh!” With a flick of his right hand, the crazy killer sliced another incoming group of adventurers into pieces. With a flash, he leapt up and arced through the air, evading the onslaught of long-ranged attacks, and disappearing among the tree leaves once more.

Roger arrogantly stayed where he stood and nonchalantly declared, “I, Roger, won’t move from this spot. Come and try to kill me if you can. I’ll take your life and show that my Golden Wolf Killer Slayer is true to its name!”

“Hmph...” The homicidal maniac’s voice floated out from amidst the trees. “Roger, is it? Don’t get too cocky. I was careless just now and tried to fight you at a range you excel at, but now that I’ve decided you are a worthy opponent...I won’t give you such chances anymore!”

“Tch...” Roger frowned and shouted back, “I’m just going to stand here and wait for you. Just come and give me all you’ve got!”

“Ok!” As the shout of reply rang through the air, the crazy killer’s figure swung down from the left side as if on a trapeze, with both hands seemingly grasping empty air. Roger abruptly turned around to face the approaching enemy and adopted a battle stance.

“Hiyah!” As the gap between the two of them closed, the homicidal maniac suddenly let out a loud cry and a black thread instantly materialised behind Roger, pulling him down to the ground. In the same fluid movement, the black thread twisted and turned in several flashes before disappearing from sight once more.

“What? What was that?!” Cries of astonishment rang out from the crowd.

Roger, who was now lying on the ground, barely caught sight of the homicidal maniac rushing towards him like lightning, and was completely unable to react in time!

The killer looked at Roger’s helpless position on the ground, a pitying expression in his gaze once more. But this time, he suddenly felt something was off about the situation. When he thought about it more, he realised that Roger didn’t seem the slightest bit panicked! He was just leisurely lying on the ground, his right hand rubbing his chin with an expression of anticipation on his face!

“Not good!” As soon as the killer realised this, a horrifying, demon-like aura suddenly flared out from the top of the giant tree behind Roger with crushing pressure!

With great difficulty, everyone looked up to see an extremely tall and robust figure raise a large blade into the air. The next instant, the figure seemed to split both the heaven and earth with a powerful downwards slash!

The movements of the homicidal maniac and the bladesman formed a parabolic trajectory; once the killer swung down above where Roger lay, he would crash straight into the moving bladesman...and the killer would have absolutely no time to attack!

The only weapon he held was a dagger, while the opposite party was holding a giant blade at least two meters long. Moreover, their professions were exact opposites, and the killer would surely die if he directly received the bladesman’s heavy blow!

But the crazy killer wouldn’t be eliminated so easily. With gritted teeth, he retracted his left hand and his body that had originally been rushing straight forwards suddenly shot backwards along the path he had come from!

The bladesman didn't attempt to pursue the retreating killer. He elegantly resheathed his blade in midair with relaxed aura, as if the battle had already ended.

The killer shot a glance at the swordsman with a feeling of loss for the first time. Without the help of his threads, it would've been impossible to move under the opponent's blade aura that had enveloped him just now!

"Hehe...I've been waiting for you for ages!" A charming voice suddenly rang out from across the killer. When he turned around to look, a bright glow blinded his eyes!

"Clang!" The killer hurriedly brandished his dagger and a loud sound of clashing metal rang through the air. His body fell to the ground with a thud as he felt a chilling air that seemed like it had risen from a frozen hell...this was the Ice Prison!

Before the homicidal maniac had gotten a chance to crawl up from the ground, thick layers of ice quickly began to form over his entire body. The next instant, an agile, snake-like stream of ice came weaving down from the giant tree, instantly connecting itself with the Ice Prison.

From the treetop, Suo Jia extended his right hand lightly tapped the Ocean's Soul on the ice stream. Freezing Touch and Ice and Snow Pact were simultaneously activated in addition to the Ice Prison. With the boost of the Divine Artifact, there was no way anyone could even dream of escaping from Suo Jia's magic, even if their strength far surpassed his!

With the homicidal maniac finally caught, the surrounding adventurers all began to loudly charge over with their weapons in hand, determined to dismember his body into a million pieces!

"Halt!" Just as everyone was about to attack, a low shout of anger rang out. The ice stream that had been connected to the Ice Prison suddenly curled itself up. Everyone watched as the extremely thick, python-like ice stream descended from the treetop with Suo

Jia standing on top.

Suo Jia looked down at the trapped maniac killer from where he stood atop the head of the ice stream. Although Suo Jia also wanted to just kill the maniac, he also knew that there was no way he could actually make such a move!

Of course, it wasn't like Suo Jia was a benevolent person; rather, he could clearly recall that the last time they were here, the homicidal maniac had spared their lives. Knowing that, how could Suo Jia kill the other party now?

Chapter 391 – Finally Passing the Checkpoint Pt. 2

Finally, Suo Jia turned around and said in a low voice, “The path to the third checkpoint has already been cleared. All of you should just go and do what you’re supposed to be doing. The homicidal maniac’s punishment is my job!”

There was a moment of stunned silence, before everyone began to protest angrily, “Why should it be up to you only? Do you know how many of our comrades that killer has murdered? Nobody here has the right to decide that guy’s fate. That should be something that all the adventurers here at the second checkpoint take part of!”

“Pfft...” Suo Jia sneered in disdain and frigidly replied, “I don’t think I, Suo Jia, need permission from anyone else if I want to do something!”

This statement further infuriated everyone else. A dignified voice rang out amidst the crowd, “Mr. Suo Jia, your achievements and virtue are traits that we will always remember. However, if I may offer you some advice, you really should hand over that killer. Unless you mean to say that you want all of us adventurers here to be your enemy?”

Upon hearing such disgustingly, self-righteous words, Suo Jia couldn’t even be bothered to reply. Instead, he simply raised the Ocean’s Soul in his hand. The sky instantly darkened as Hailstorm Technique was activated!

Although it was clear that nobody believed Suo Jia would truly make a move, arrows of ice quickly began to fall from the skies. But even if they believed Suo Jia was serious now, it was too late!

Cries of misery filled the air. The two thousand or so people that were further away successfully evaded the onslaught of the storm,

but the other thousand or so were completely eradicated on the spot. At this, the remaining adventurers finally realised that the demon-like Suo Jia standing atop his ice serpent was most likely even more horrifying of a figure than the homicidal maniac!

Suo Jia met the adventurers' gazes and then surveyed the thousand morbid corpses around him before declaring, "I'm not afraid of any enemy, as anyone that would try to oppose me will certainly die!"

With the combination of these words and Suo Jia's appearance with his dark cloak covering his entire body, everyone present truly felt as if he was a god of death that had arisen from hell. Almost instantly, the survivors all retreated. If they stayed around any longer and ended up getting on Suo Jia's bad side, who knew what would happen to them? They could barely survive an encounter with the crazy killer, there was no way they could go up against Suo Jia at their level of strength!

Suo Jia let out a snort at the disappearing crowds as he commanded the ice serpent to bring him back down to the ground. With a wave of his hand, Ice Prison was immediately dispersed.

After stretching out his previously frozen limbs, the homicidal maniac stared at Suo Jia's party in confusion and asked, "Why did you release your Ice Prison magic? Are you not afraid that-?"

Suo Jia raised a hand and firmly interjected, "I owe you a life from last time, so I naturally can't kill you this time. You can go..."

The homicidal maniac momentarily froze in shock. He then tentatively turned around and with some uncertainty, began to walk away with his guard raised. He just couldn't believe Suo Jia wasn't toying around with him.

However, despite the distance between them growing more and more, Suo Jia's party didn't make any moves. With a complicated expression on his face, the homicidal maniac shot Suo Jia one last glance before suddenly leaping up and instantly disappearing into

the forest once more.

Only after the crazy killer had completely disappeared did Xiang Yun, Roger, and Nicole flock around Suo Jia and inquire, “Boss, why did you let him go?”

Suo Jia simply shook his head and offered no explanation aside from, “This is my own private matter, and I don’t want to say. I hope you all understand!”

The others exchanged looks among themselves and Xiang Yun couldn’t help but chuckle, “Since it’s a private matter, we won’t ask. After all, everyone has their own secrets...come on, let’s just hurry over to pass the checkpoint!”

With a nod, Suo Jia took the lead and began to rush towards the third checkpoint with the others tailing closely behind. Soon, all four of them had disappeared from the forest.

Once they left and the forest fell silent once more...a green figure nimbly jumped down from the treetops, with the same complicated expression on their face as before. As the green figure looked off into the distance where Suo Jia’s party had disappeared, he sighed and murmured, “I indeed spared your life before, but what you gave me was more than just my life. You also spared me from the endless humiliation and torment I would’ve received. You may not be willing to owe me a favor, but that doesn’t mean I’m willing to owe you one either.”

After mulling over the issue for a long while, the green figure suddenly whistled between his fingers. A black figure immediately flew out from the forest and stopped before him.

At closer look, the black creature was actually an extremely nimble cheetah with black, satin-like fur. The green figure rubbed its back and murmured, “Darkfang! It looks like...it’s time for us to leave this place. I owe someone a favor, so we have to catch up to him. Once I return the favor, we’ll immediately return. What do you think?”

The black panther opened its mouth and let out a deep roar in reply. The green figure laughed out loud and agilely flipped onto the cheetah's back and they immediately began to charge forward at full speed. Both figures quickly disappeared from the forest like a mirage in the direction Suo Jia's party had gone!

Meanwhile, Suo Jia's group had finally left the Green Forest Canyon. As soon as they'd exited, a refreshing, damp wind welcomed them. In the distance, they could see the borders of Barry Island across the extremely vast sea, its strong waves crashing on the shores before them.

"Yahoo!" Nicole threw her arms out in excitement and raced towards the shore. There was a beautiful little village right next to the water with flocks of seagulls flying in circles above. Suo Jia could tell from first sight that they had arrived at their destination: a relay station!

Suo Jia called Nicole back and they all began to walk towards the village. Within a few minutes, they entered the village and quickly confirmed that they had indeed entered the relay station of the third checkpoint!

Suo Jia reported their purpose to the relay station master and after verifying Suo Jia's documents, the station master happily told Suo Jia that they could leave Barry Island by boat in two days and enter the third checkpoint!

Since they had to wait another whole day, they could only leave the relay station and after exploring the little village for a bit, Suo Jia abruptly announced, "Alright, tomorrow morning at eight, let's all meet up and go to the beach to enjoy some good food and drink! What do you think?"

Roger asked in surprise, "Boss, aren't you the one always saying we should be training? Why suddenly suggest something like this instead?"

Suo Jia smiled and calmly answered, "Everything has to have

some flexibility. Since we've been working so painstakingly for the past six months, we should take these two days' time to properly relax. After all, the battles that await us past the third checkpoint will just get harsher!"

The others immediately agreed. Suo Jia chuckled and added, "Plus, I'm just saying we should go and have fun during the day. Who said you guys didn't need to train at night? You can definitely train while playing!"

At this, the previously jubilant Xiang Yun, Roger, and Nicole all fell to ground in utter disbelief.

Chapter 392 – Spiritual Journey Pt. 1

Whoosh...

Suo Jia, clad in a pair of simple trunks, lay leisurely on the beach to bask in the sunlight. While listening to nothing but the soothing sounds of the rolling waves, he couldn't help but feel an unprecedented sense of calm and relaxation.

“Waaa...don't you dare come over here!” Nicole's energetic shouts suddenly rang out. Currently, she was having fun playing with several of the village's children. Since entering the Greater Trade Routes, she hadn't ever truly felt so much joy. Suo Jia couldn't help but smile at the sound of her laughter — his decision to relax today had undoubtedly been a good choice.

When he turned around, he could see Xiang Yun sitting cross-legged further down the shore. He was currently atop a cliff at least dozens of meters above the roaring waves crashing down on the reef below.

A typical person wouldn't ever dare to sit somewhere like that, but that was exactly what Xiang Yun was doing. In fact, he was resting on a slab of rock at the very edge of the cliff — there was no support beneath him aside from that rock, the only thing below were the crashing waves! Moreover, the slab was so delicate that it would even sway with the strong winds. It looked as if it could fall over at any point!

Suo Jia just couldn't understand why Xiang Yun would choose that kind of place to train. Wasn't it a bit too dangerous? It was on a precipice over roaring waves, and the slab he was sitting on could collapse in an instant.

Of course, Suo Jia had tried to dissuade Xiang Yun from training there earlier. But Xiang Yun had replied saying that he had been stuck in a bottleneck since meeting Suo Jia. Although Xiang Yun's strength had undoubtedly been increasing during the past half

year, he hadn't improved in mental training at all.

The choice of training in such a location was for the purpose of completely overcoming any fears. Once he was able to ignore the roars of the waves below, he would enter a state of mind where he could shut out elements from his surroundings, and break through his bottleneck!

Suo Jia turned to look the opposite direction and quickly spotted a whirlpool that had formed in the calm part of the ocean. That was where Roger currently was.

"Fwoosh!" Roger suddenly burst out of the whirlpool's center to take a few deep gulps of air before sinking underwater and creating another whirlpool!

Suo Jia chuckled at this sight. As someone that had swum before, he knew very well how hard it was to move underwater. Yet Roger had purposely chosen to practice underwater, claiming that it would strengthen the muscles in his legs so that he could move faster. Moreover, Roger was practicing one of the techniques that had been passed down from his ancestors: Dragon's Heaven Cleave!

While pondering all this, Suo Jia suddenly detected a faint fragrance mixed with the salty breeze. Although he originally ignored it, thinking that it might've just been his imagination, the scent gradually grew stronger and stronger until finally, he realised that something was off.

"Little boy, what are you doing here all alone?" Just then, a delicate, coy voice rang from behind him.

Suo Jia immediately leapt up and swiveled around in shock. Although he had been somewhat lost in thought, the possibility of someone approaching this close to him without his notice wasn't an easy feat!

But as he turned around to look behind him, he suddenly felt his

nose grow warm as something seemed to flow out...when he subconsciously reached up to touch his nose, he found his hand covered in blood.

“Pffft...” Although the female before him seemed somewhat taken aback by his reaction, she daintily covered her mouth and began to giggle in amusement.

With great effort, Suo Jia tried to regain his calm. The age of the female standing in front of him was indiscernible. Although she looked around 18 or so, her body was extremely voluptuous, and her well endowed chest made her age seem closer to 25.

She had a mature, flirtatious expression painted on her snow-white face, and she wore a pair of crystal-like glasses that just made her large eyes seem even more charming.

The extremely revealing swimsuit she wore confidently showed off her extremely voluptuous breasts and deep cleavage that seemed as if they could just suck a man’s soul away.

A cat with pitch-black fur contently lay in her crossed arms. At the moment, it was clearly glaring at Suo Jia with a hateful expression.

Further down, one could see the woman’s flat abdomen and an emerald gem embedded in her naughtily exposed navel. The gem was sparkling with an exceptionally bright light, and its clear, translucent appearance naturally brought out the beauty of the woman’s dark green eyes.

Contrasting her excessively large chest, the woman’s waist was unbelievably small. In fact, Suo Jia hadn’t ever imagined that a body could naturally be curved so drastically — and this body part that he couldn’t even describe gave him a massive shock.

In his experience, a woman’s chest and the waist always demonstrated the golden ratio. But now, this perception was entirely thrown off — this woman could be the devil’s incarnate, as

there was no way one could avoid being tempted by her!

Her body was equally voluptuous below her smooth navel. The outlines of her swimsuit did hardly any job at all in covering her figure, especially the area in between her thighs, where a single tantalizing crevice was very distinctly showing. As a man who was very well experienced with the female body, Suo Jia knew what this sight at first glance! This was the reason behind his very furious nosebleed.

Further below, the woman sported a pair of beautifully long and slender legs. Despite the fact that she was standing on the sandy shores of the beach, Suo Jia could swear there wasn't a single grain of sand stuck to her dainty, jade feet. And even more curiously... she didn't seem to be sinking into the sand. The sand, which shouldn't been able to carry much weight to begin with, seemed like it was hardly even bending under her feet.

Just what kind of woman is this? Had she appeared before Suo Jia before, he would've hardly spared a glance at her. But now, at eighteen years of age, Suo Jia was finally starting to enjoy the springtime of his youth. To have a woman whose body as stimulatingly revealing as this, Suo Jia's loss of composure was to be expected.

Many a time had Suo Jia seen the naked body of the fairer sex all in thanks to the Empress pushing him to scrutinize her maid from head to toe, so his knowledge of the female body was even more complete than that of his own hand! And yet, this was the very first time Suo Jia had ever been at such a loss over the sight of a woman's body!

He was completely transfixed, fascinated by what could only be described as the most beautiful and sexiest woman he had ever seen. One glance was all it took for Suo Jia to start to burn with lust. He was infatuated with her. Deep down in his heart, the voice of his own temptations was already whispering to him, "I want her. She is mine. Every single part of her must be mine to taste!"

He swallowed with much difficulty. His throat felt parched, as if there was a smoldering fire that had started somewhere in his stomach and was burning away at his throat. If he could, he would immediately bring this woman back to his room so that he could use what he had learned those years back in the Empress's chambers to thoroughly ravish her!

While Suo Jia's mind was still racing with such thoughts, the woman across from him smiled sweetly and gracefully stretched out her slender and delicately-sculpted jade hand to gently caress Suo Jia's face.

Suo Jia didn't show any signs of evading the opposite hand. He caught a whiff of the woman's faint aroma, and then felt the ice-cold, but exceptionally soft and smooth hand lightly caress his cheek.

Suo Jia closed his eyes in bliss and could barely keep himself from letting out a groan of pleasure. So a woman's touch could actually be this soft, this smooth, this fragrant? Heavens...why hadn't he ever realised this before?

"Hm?" With a giggle, she stepped forward so that she now stood only a few centimeters away from Suo Jia. Only then was Suo Jia surprised to discover that this woman stood nearly eye-level to his 180 centimeter tall self! It was clear to see that she was definitely over 170 centimeters at least.

At this close of a distance, the two could almost hear each other's breaths. All Suo Jia could sense was her pleasant fragrance slowly pervading his entire body. He impulsively opened his arms to embrace the woman before him....

"Don't!" When she noticed Suo Jia's audacious move, the woman's expression instantly changed. With supernatural speed, she immediately retreated from him.

When Suo Jia saw her avoid his contact, he couldn't contain his inward disappointment. The woman seemed to calm down and she

rolled her charming eyes at him in exasperation before gracefully turning around and walking back towards the village. Her charming voice floated behind her, “Don’t worry boy, we’ll meet again!”

Suo Jia remained distracted for the rest of the day, as if in a constant dream. His mind constantly recalling the female’s lovely face, her coy and sweet voice, and the delicate fragrance she carried that could seemingly seep through his body.

Chapter 393 – Spiritual Journey Pt. 2

After playing at the beach all day, Suo Jia's party finally returned to their inn at night. Suo Jia absentmindedly lay in his bed, unable to sleep and with no desire to train either. Although he knew slacking like this wasn't good, he couldn't control his consciousness at the moment. He just couldn't muster the energy to do anything, all that filled his mind was his desire to meet that woman again.

Although it seemed absurd, this was Suo Jia's reality at the moment – someone like him whose strength was beautifying woman had been completely enchanted away by a naturally gorgeous female. They had only met once, but throughout the duration of the encounter, Suo Jia hadn't been able to speak at all. Instead, he had fallen deep into her trap, entirely unable to free himself/

Suo Jia stared at the full moon from his window in a daze and murmured to himself, "She said that we would meet again...I wonder if that's true? Would we really meet again? If we do, what should I say? Should I reach my hand out?"

His mind remained in this frenzy and kept him awake all night. He couldn't even meditate. Only after Xiang Yun arrived outside his door to notify him that the boat was ready and that they should head out did Suo Jia finally snap out in panic. If they left like this, would he still be able to meet her?

Bang! Having waited for so long outside the door without any answer, Xiang Yun finally lost patience and kicked Suo Jia's door open. Loftily standing at the now open entrance, Xiang Yun asked with his brows furrowed in confusion, "Boss, why didn't you answer? The ship is already all set to go. If we don't head out soon, the fog will rise again and we'll have to wait another week!"

Suo Jia frantically turned around to stammer out, "Um...can we

stay another two days? I don't want to leave yet..."

"Stay another two days?" Xiang Yun stared at him in confusion. "Of course that wouldn't be a problem, but there must be a reason?"

"Uh...I..." Suo Jia tried to piece an answer together, but he couldn't come up with any reasonable explanation.

When Xiang Yun saw Suo Jia's dazed state, he gave up and simply shook his head. "Alright, we can just stay for a bit longer then. I'll go let Nicole and Roger know!" Without better option, Xiang Yun turned and walked out.

Suo Jia couldn't help but grit his teeth in frustration as he watched Xiang Yun start to walk away. Although he madly wanted to see the woman again, dragging his friends down to stay here was inexcusable. After all, Suo Jia just wasn't the kind of person that could have his friendships affected by a single woman!

At this, he hurriedly shouted out, "Forget it, Xiang Yun, we won't stay after all. Let's immediately head out!"

"Huh?" Xiang Yun stopped in his tracks and turned around to look at Suo Jia in confusion. "Now you don't want to stay? Are you really sure about that?"

Suo Jia resolutely nodded his head and declared through clenched teeth, "That's right, we actually don't have any reason to stay any longer!"

Xiang Yun nodded. Although he didn't really understand what was going on, he did agree with Suo Jia's last statement. With this, he began to head out again, "Then we'll wait for you on the ship. Hurry up and get ready."

Once Suo Jia saw Xiang Yun's figure disappear off into the distance, he dejectedly plopped back down on his bed, staring out at the distance in despair. Could it really be that he would only be fated to have that single meeting with that woman?

Ten minutes later, Suo Jia listlessly arrived at the pier and boarded the ship. When Nicole saw how out of spirits he was, she asked Roger, “What’s been up with Young Master recently? Ever since he returned to rest from the beach, he’s been blanked out the entire time. What exactly happened?”

“Pfft...” Roger glanced at Suo Jia and laughed, “Since you’re a girl, you wouldn’t understand. When a boy passes the age of eighteen, he enters a state similar to a bull in heat. Judging from Young Master’s preoccupied manner, he must be thinking about a woman!”

“Ah!” Suo Jia cried out after hearing Roger’s words, his cheeks flushed bright red. He hadn’t imagined that Roger would be able to tell what was bothering him with a single glance. He miserably walked back into the cabin without a word, his head lowered to hide his burning cheeks.

Roger gaped in astonishment at the sight of Suo Jia’s embarrassed reaction. After a period of stunned silence, he exclaimed in disbelief, “My god! I was just joking, don’t tell me that what I randomly said was actually true?”

Nicole glanced over and asked in confusion, “Roger, I know what a bull in heat is like. It’s when they charge like mad at any red, moving thing. Are you saying...that’s what Young Master is like right now too?” Nicole looked down at her red clothing in concern.

Roger blanked out for a good while before bursting out in laughter – not just chuckles, but actually rolling around on the ground while clutching his stomach in laughter.

After a long while, he finally stopped laughing and sat up before asking Nicole solemnly, “Nicole, answer me truthfully...are you still a virgin?”

Nicole furiously blushed at Roger’s frank inquiry. She tossed a punch at Roger and pouted, “What are you saying, why are you asking such random things!”

“Hehe...” Although he hadn’t gotten an actual reply, Roger could immediately figure out many things from Nicole’s expression. He asked her mysteriously, “Let me tell you, after the age of eighteen, men start thinking about girls. The “in heat” I was talking about means wanting to hold a girl in turn her into his woman!”

“Oi!” Nicole cried out in shock while hiding her flushed cheeks behind her hands as she reprimanded, “You rascal, you’re just unable to say anything decent. Don’t just make stuff up!”

“Mm...” Roger ignored Nicole’s jab and rubbed his chin as he murmured, “But exactly what kind of woman would be able to completely change Boss like that?”

Nicole couldn’t listen any further. She hurriedly stood up and ran towards her living quarters while angrily shouting back, “You’re crazy, how would I know who Young Master is thinking of!”

Nicole raced full speed back to her own space, her hands tightly clutching her chest as her heartbeat raced so fast that she felt like it would leap out of her throat!

Suo Jia had only become like this recently, and from Nicole’s knowledge, she was the only girl that he’d had any contact with. In that case, didn’t that make her the only possible candidate of Suo Jia’s feelings? When she thought of how Suo Jia would possibly want to change her from a girl to his woman, she felt heat rush through her entire body. It was really too embarrassing....and eventually, unable to suppress her shyness, she buried herself under her bed covers in attempt to chase the thoughts away.

Meanwhile, the ship had finally set off. Suo Jia sat within his own chambers, staring out the porthole and watching the little village gradually get further and further away. In his daze, Suo Jia felt like he could see that alluring figure standing on the shore and looking towards him in disappointment. However, just when Suo Jia excitedly stood up and tried to call out, the figure disappeared.

Suo Jia sullenly sat back down and wrapped his hands around his head in misery. He had to leave this place for the sake of his friends, but he couldn't escape the agony he was feeling...

At the same time, Nicole was currently tossing and turning restlessly in bed. What to do? What was she supposed to do? Because of her, Young Master was so distracted. How was she supposed to fix this? If...Young Master came looking for her, was she supposed to reject him or accept?

If she rejected him, Young Master would definitely feel worse, even more dejected than he was now. Nicole couldn't possibly bear to see him like that. But if she accepted, how was she supposed to deal with what would follow? In fact, she couldn't even imagine the end result. Although she had a vague understanding of lovers' relationships, the little bit she did know was already enough to make Nicole want to hide in shame for all eternity. That kind of thing was just way too embarrassing...

Chapter 394 – Danger at Sea Pt. 1

Suo Jia locked himself in his room for three days. Although he had already lost sight of that village ages ago, he still couldn't stop thinking about it.

Bang! Xiang Yun slammed the door open and glanced at Suo Jia before sitting himself down next to Suo Jia's bed. "Boss, do you have anything you want to say to me? I've noticed that you recently haven't been like your usual self at all!"

Xiang Yun's question managed to finally force Suo Jia to escape his own thoughts and turned around to glance at Xiang Yun. "Oh! Alright...it's about time for us to talk a bit. How much longer are we to stay on this ship until we reach the third checkpoint?"

"Huh?" Xiang Yun blankly stared at Suo Jia for a long while before shaking his head in response. "Boss, it looks like there really is something seriously wrong with you! If you continue on like this, you will get destroyed. You definitely need to tell me now, what exactly has been bothering you?"

"Uh..." Suo Jia struggled to reply. "I'm fine, why...is something wrong?"

Seeing Suo Jia refuse to answer still, Xiang Yun coldly responded, "Of course there's something wrong. You're the leader of the group, yet you don't know anything about the third checkpoint. In that case, let me enlighten you: we've been at the third checkpoint since two days ago. Moreover...for the next 6-12 months, we'll remain at sea!"

"What?!" Suo Jia was now completely clear-headed as he exclaimed in shock, "What do you mean? How can that be?"

Xiang Yun tiredly explained, "The third checkpoint refers to over a hundred of islands scattered across the ocean. To pass this checkpoint, we must travel across the ocean and explore its

entirety. Only after reaching the end of this checkpoint will we return back on land!”

Suo Jia couldn't help but fall silent. He knew that having not known what his group would be getting into before leading them here meant that he had completely failed as the boss!

Under normal circumstances, Suo Jia would've stayed at the last relay station to gather enough information and go through all of it himself before deciding to head out. But because of that woman, he hadn't made any preparations for this journey at all. What kind of use was a boss like that?

Seeing Suo Jia's expression of self-blame, Xiang Yun couldn't help but sigh. Recalling what Roger had told him a few days ago, Xiang Yun tentatively asked, “Boss, is a woman the reason you've been so out of it?”

“Ah!” Suo Jia let out a cry of astonishment. Although he didn't exactly answer, his facial expression only was plenty clear.

Xiang Yun chuckled dryly and stood up from his seat. “Boss, even heroes have a weakness for the charms of a beautiful woman. It's not something you should feel is shameful. Tell me, which woman did you fall in love with? Is it Nicole? I can help you tell her...”

“No!” Suo Jia hurriedly interrupted. “No...don't go, it's not Nicole!”

“Hm?” Xiang Yun sighed and asked, “If it's not Nicole, then what's the issue? We can just immediately turn around and grab that woman for you to ravage however you please!”

“Gah!” Suo Jia let out a strangled cry. “You...how can you say things like that? What do you think of me as? A womanizer?”

“Oh?” Xiang Yun shot back in reply, “Are you telling me that's not the case?”

“It's...” Suo Jia hesitated to respond, unable to come up with a rebuttal. Truly...if he wasn't a womanizer, then why couldn't he

stop thinking about that woman? But at the same time, his desire wasn't just as simple as wanting to ravage her, he wanted to treasure and protect her!

As Suo Jia once again withdrew deep into his thoughts. Xiang Yun scratched his head in bewilderment. He didn't understand anything about these kinds of emotions, he was always entirely focused on his martial arts. How could he possibly help with this kind of romance-related situation?

If Suo Jia had feelings for Nicole, Xiang Yun would've just helped him speak to her. Although he didn't know too much about feelings of affection, he knew that if Suo Jia really expressed those kinds of intentions to Nicole, she surely would not reject him.

If Suo Jia's target was another woman, the situation was even simpler. He didn't even have to worry about rejection – all they needed to do was capture her and let Suo Jia do whatever he wanted with her. With their strength, any form of rejection was useless.

However, now that it was clear that Suo Jia didn't want Nicole, yet also was against forcibly seizing the woman on his mind, Xiang Yun had absolutely no way of helping even if he wanted to. After all, he didn't actually know who Suo Jia's object of affection was, nor where she was, so how could Xiang Yun seize her?

Xiang Yun tried to keep pressing Suo Jia to tell him, but Suo Jia refused to answer from beginning to end. Eventually, Xiang Yun could only leave the room although he knew that Suo Jia wouldn't last much longer if this continued. He had completely lost his qualifications as a true warrior. However, worrying about this was pointless; it was something only Suo Jia himself could resolve.

A week quickly passed by, and the small ship was still sailing forwards. Although Suo Jia had occasionally come out on deck a few times in this time, he wouldn't respond to anyone's questions. However, it was clear to see that it wasn't because he was

unwilling to answer, but because he was completely unable to even register hearing their inquiries!

Xiang Yun sat cross-legged at the bow of the ship with his eyes shut as he focused on the Hegemon Arts. He'd been stuck trying to break through this bottleneck in his training for a long time now!

As for Roger and Nicole, they were both next to the side railings of the ship. Nicole seemed to be deep in thought as she stared at the golden sun gradually disappearing under the horizon. Meanwhile, Roger was fishing. After all, he was the one in charge of the group's meals; any fish he could catch tonight would be used for dinner.

After a long while, Roger broke the silence first. He turned to look at Nicole, who was standing maybe five meters away. "Nicole, what are you thinking about so deeply?"

"Nothing..." Seemingly taken aback by the sudden question, Nicole shook her head with flushed cheeks. "Nothing at all, I'm not thinking of anything in particular, was just in a daze."

"Tch..." Roger couldn't help but internally rebuke, If you're not thinking about anything, how could you be in a daze? Being in a daze means there's clearly something on your mind...

Roger then turned to look at Suo Jia's securely closed door and casually asked, "Nicole, I'm sure you've noticed this too, but there's been something up with Boss lately. Every time I go visit him, he's just blankly sitting on his bed and staring out his window. His face is deathly pale and he seems to have lost a good deal of weight!"

Nicole couldn't help but tremble at these words. She hurriedly turned and rushed back to her own quarters...

After entering her room, Nicole leaned against her door in self-conflict. She felt that Suo Jia's changes were all because of her, that he stayed cooped up in his room all day because he didn't dare

to face her. The few times he had come out, he wouldn't look at her at all. It must've been because he'd been afraid to accidentally reveal anything!

Nicole closed her eyes with great emotion as she thought how Suo Jia must like her so much, yet not dare to say anything because he was afraid of making things difficult for her. However...how could a girl like her possibly initiate anything in this situation!

In reality, Nicole had been mulling over this for an entire week, and now felt like she could face the situation head-on. As a girl, she was bound to marry someone sooner or later, as embarrassing of a thought that was right now. If her partner were to be Suo Jia, she wouldn't refuse. Although a bit afraid of the prospects, she also felt expectant and a slight longing for this to happen.

Nicole suddenly stomped on one foot and said out loud to herself with blushing cheeks, "Why can't that rascal just be a bit more aggressive? If you are serious about it, how could Nicole possibly reject any of your requests?"

While Nicole was letting out her frustrations to herself, Xiang Yun was ashen-faced outside her door, his hand frozen in the air. Just as he had been about to knock on her door, he had overheard everything she'd said through the thin door. He hadn't ever realised before just how deep Nicole's feelings towards Suo Jia were, to the point where she would devote her whole life to him. However, Xiang Yun also knew that the one in Suo Jia's heart at the moment was not Nicole!

Xiang Yun quietly dropped his hand back to his side. He had originally wanted to find Nicole in hopes that she could ease Suo Jia's worries. However, he hadn't imagined that Nicole was likewise also trapped in the snare of love. Moreover, her situation was even more worse than Suo Jia's — while he was simply infatuated, Nicole was already prepared to give her heart over!

If Nicole was the one that Suo Jia liked, everything would naturally fall in place perfectly. They'd all be happy and continue on their journey together. However, the issue was that Nicole liked Suo Jia, while Suo Jia was head over heels for someone else!

Xiang Yun returned to his previous cross-legged position on the bow of the ship. He could already faintly sense the group's internal relations at risk. A single mishap would cause the entire team to collapse and fall apart!

He spent an extremely long time trying to find some way to resolve it all, but emotions were something that nobody could ever truly master. Moreover, only the ones directly involved could really make a difference!

Xiang Yun let out a helpless sigh. The future really just depended on how Nicole and Suo Jia shaped it. Although Xiang Yun would undoubtedly hate it if the group's current synergy were to disappear, it would be an inevitable result if the team's disbandment was what the Heavens had prepared for them.

Xiang Yun couldn't help but heave another sigh before closing his eyes and returning to his meditation training once more. All he could do was see what the Heavens had prepared for the future!